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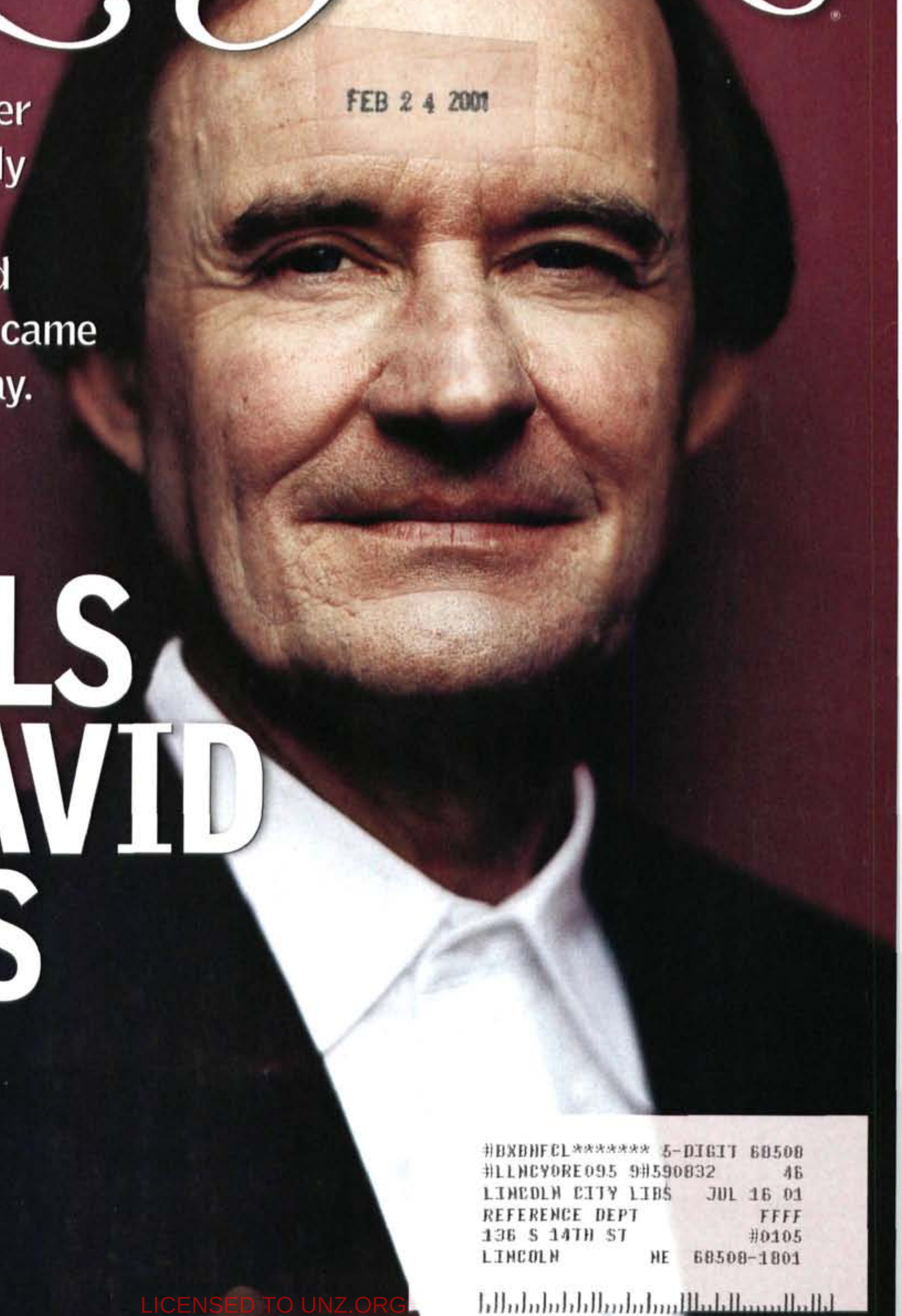

Why one superlawyer has a hand in virtually all the high-profile cases of the day. And how *Bush* v. *Gore* became the one that got away.

THE TRIALS OF DAVID BOIES

By Chris Smith

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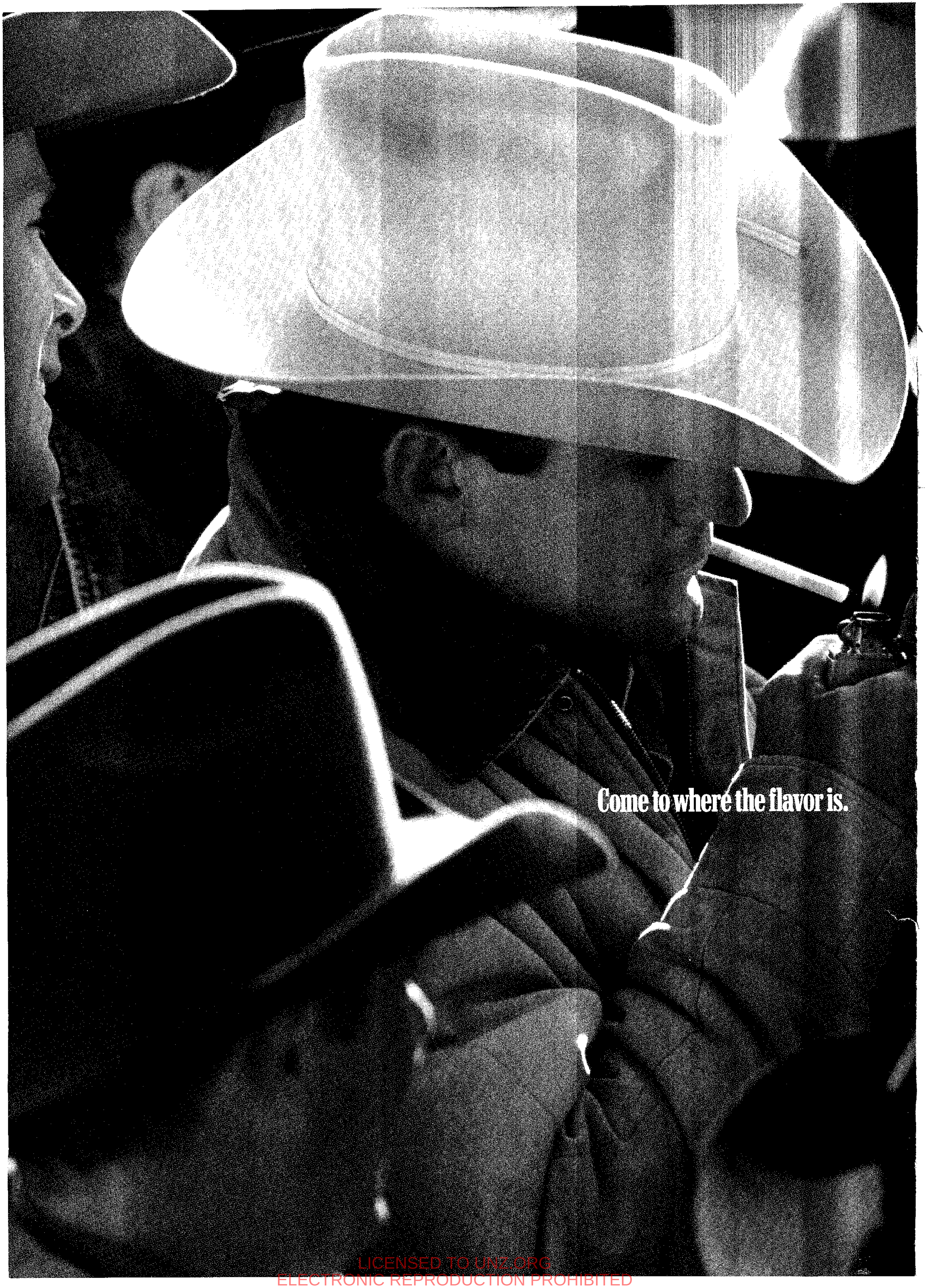
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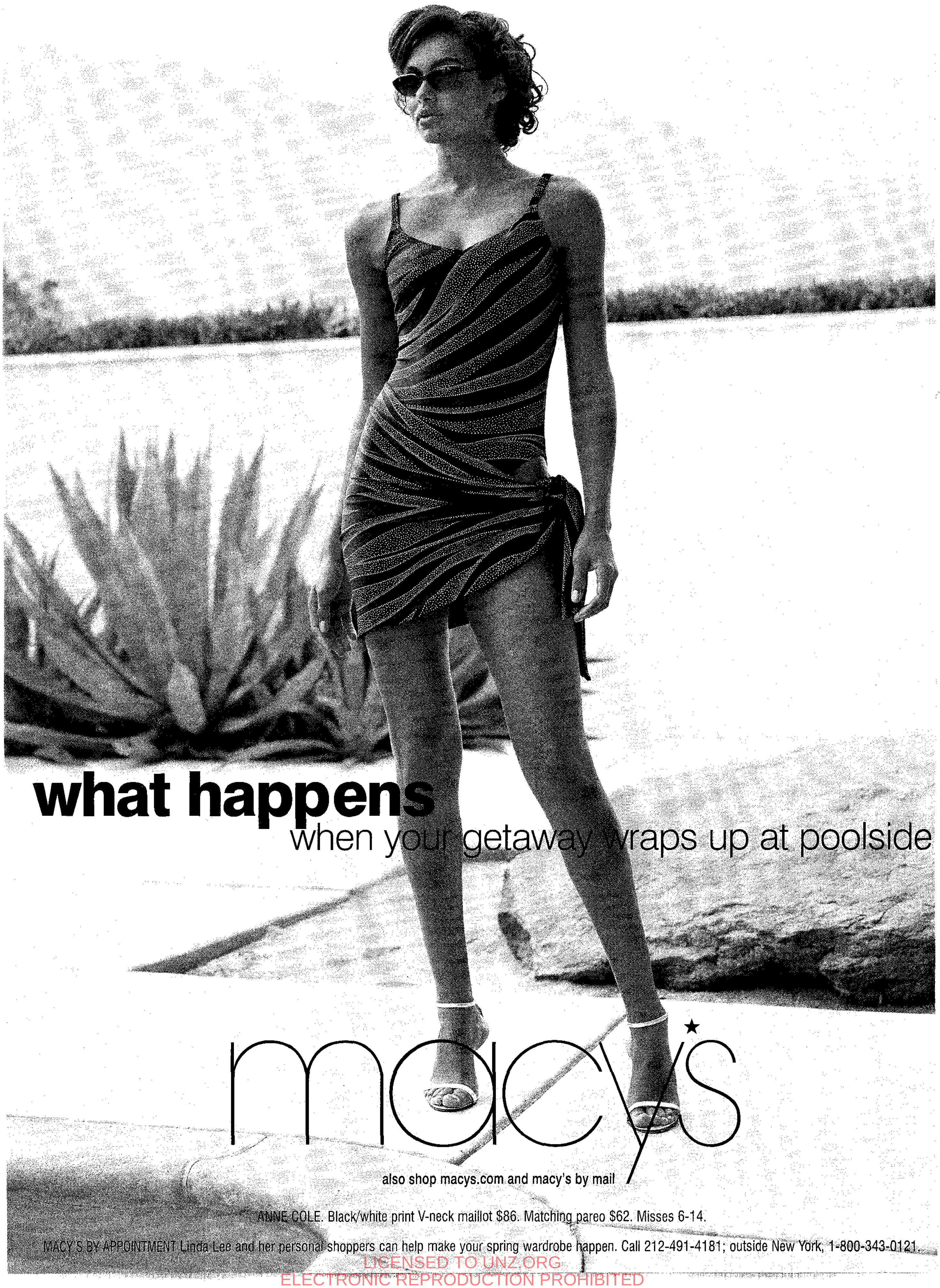
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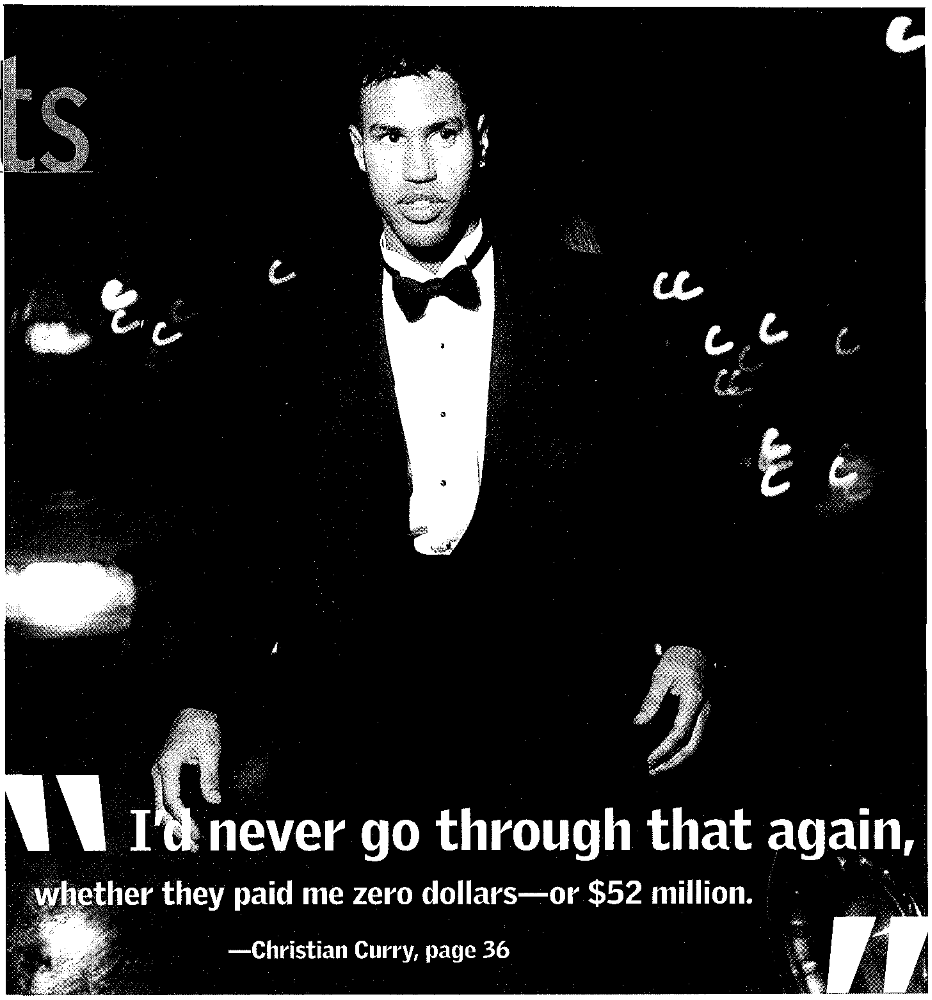

"I'd never go through that again, whether they paid me zero dollars—or $52 million."

—Christian Curry, page 36

22 Boies Don't Cry By Chris Smith

One of David Boies's key advantages used to be the element of surprise. How could a man in a Sears suit and sneakers be so sharp, so focused, so preternaturally well prepared? But that was before the election made him a national celebrity—while handing him his most devastating loss. For the record, however, the superlawyer can't see how he would have argued the case differently. "There was a sense that five justices had already made up their minds," he says.
Plus: Boies's glorious South Florida swamp fight has helped bring glamour and honor back to the legal profession. But Boies isn't the profession's only star. Here are ten young New Yorkers, from the boardroom to TV to federal court, who aren't hiding their light—or their law-school diplomas—under a bushel. **By Cameron Stracher**

36 Currying Favor By Vanessa Grigoriadis

Once upon a time, Christian Curry was fired from Morgan Stanley after nude photos of him appeared in *Playguy.* The lawsuit he settled last fall paid him not a dime, the banking house claims strenuously. Nonetheless, he's been living like a guy with a master-of-the-universe bank account ever since: chauffeured Mercedes, TriBeCa apartment, a suite at the Plaza, and dinners at Le Cirque 2000. And he still looks good without his shirt on.

40 The Maddening Crowd By Johanna Berkman

Steve Madden, once a Long Island shoe salesman, built an empire out of his instinct for shoes that make teenage girls swoon—at prices they can afford. But SEC investigators allege he participated in various schemes to make investors swoon, too. A look at the high life—and possible hard time (as in *jail* time)—of a shoe king.

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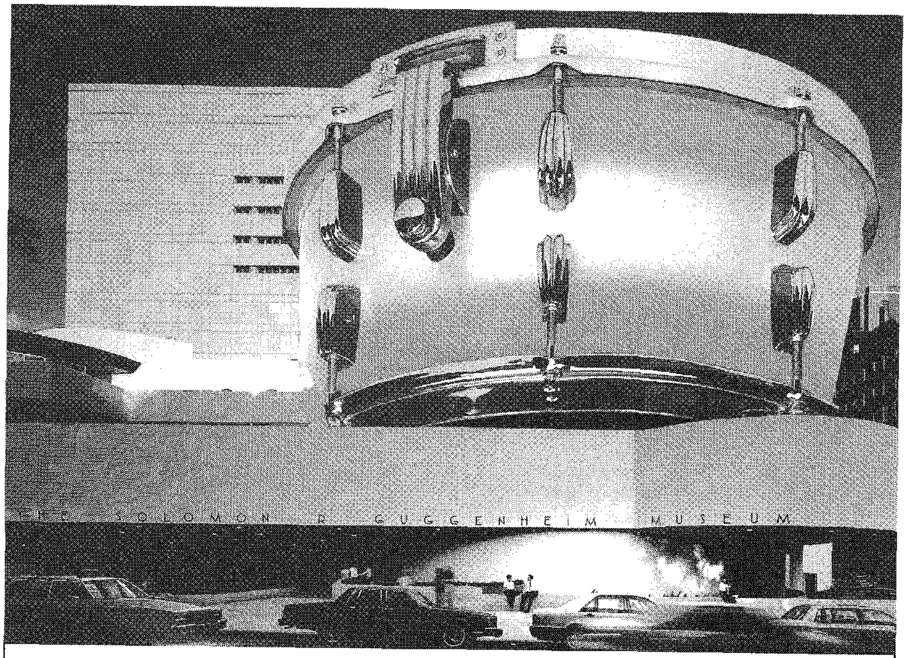
Photograph by Alex Tehrani.



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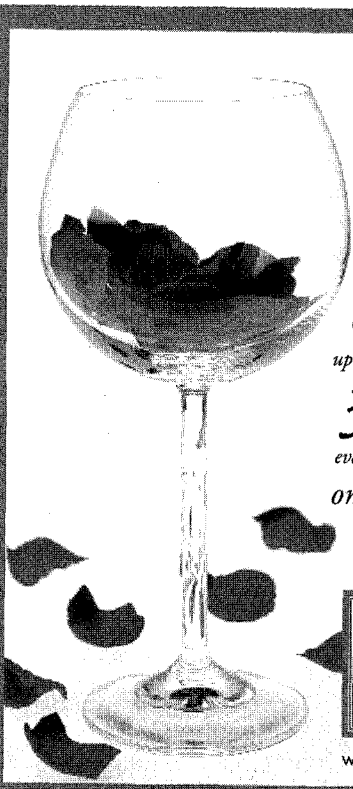

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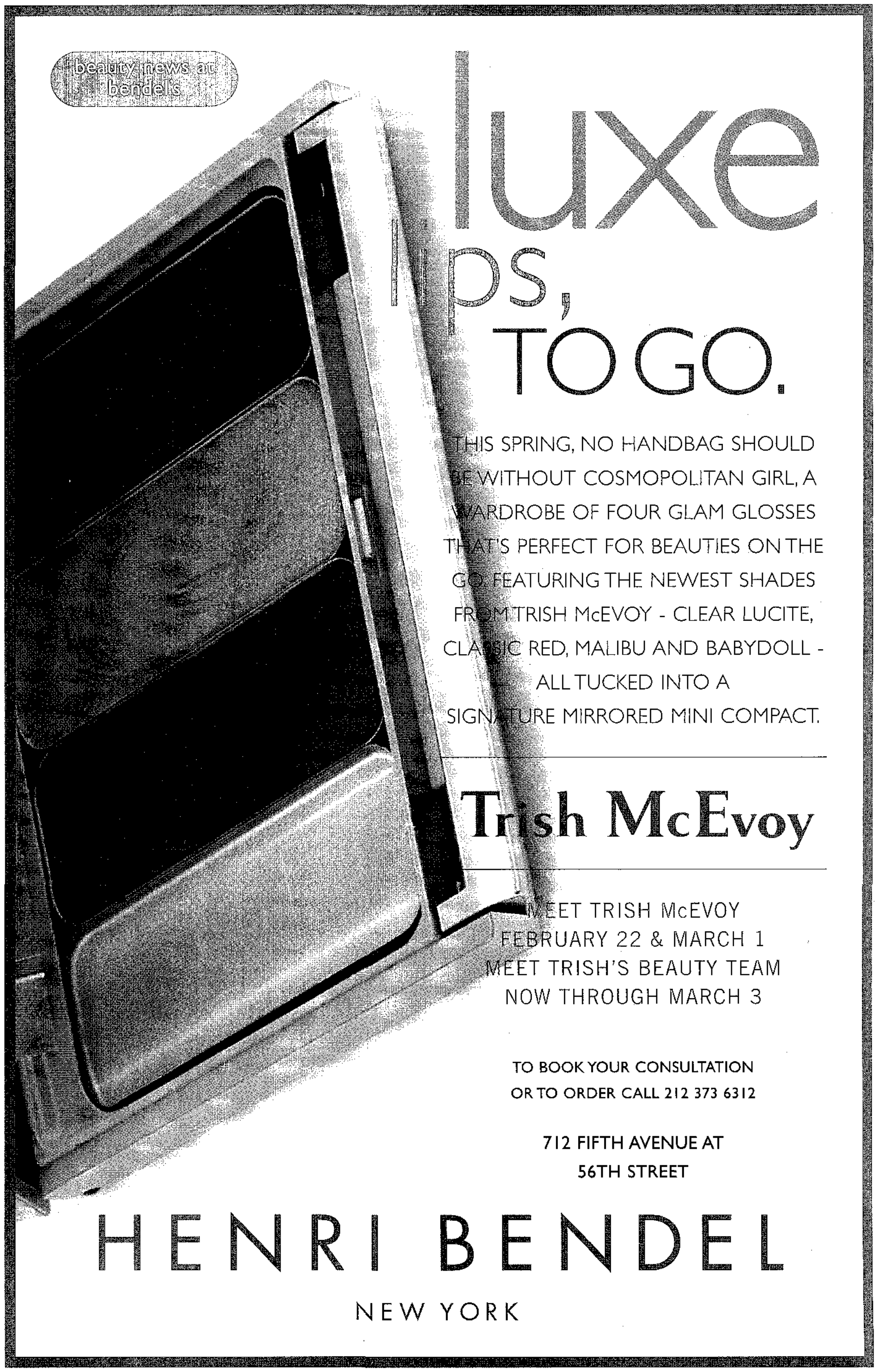
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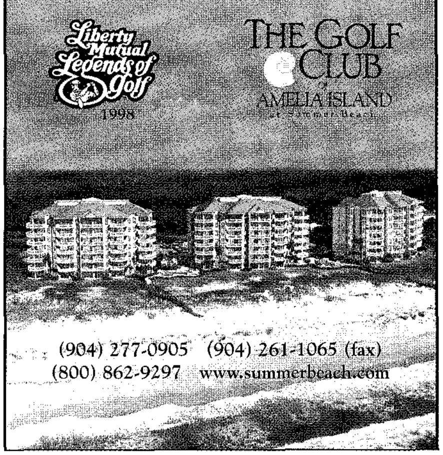

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Letters

> "I never cease to be astonished at the mileage heterosexuals get out of adultery."
>
> —Richard Schaefers

Hillary's Choice

Although I found Michael Tomasky's article "Hillary's Female Trouble" [February 5] informed, intelligent, and well-written, he failed to fully elucidate the reasons behind many women's hostility toward Mrs. Clinton. The sad truth is, many women remain unable to resist the age-old compulsion to view each other as competition and criticize their successful female peers at every turn. While I question some of Mrs. Clinton's personal choices, I could never in good conscience base my opinion of someone's professional capabilities on how she conducts her personal life. Besides, this country could do with a few more pushy women.

Ana Nersessian, MANHATTAN

The enmity some baby-boomer women feel toward Hillary is so widespread there must be something to it. But I can't help thinking it says more about feminism's unresolved issues than it does about her. I was never mystified by Hillary's decision to tough it out—First Lady was the best gig she'd had to date. But then, as a gay man, I never cease to be astonished at the mileage heterosexuals get out of adultery, either.

Richard Schaefers, WASHINGTON, D.C.

A suburban woman, born in the fifties, I am a college graduate who worked full-time until making the decision to stay at home with my children. I didn't vote for Senator Clinton, not because I was disturbed by her personal decision to stay with her husband but because, as a political creature, she has proved herself untrustworthy, unethical, and plain old arrogant.

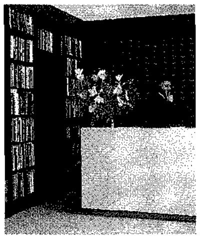
Elisabeth Landry, YONKERS, N.Y.

Donkey Kong

If Michael Wolff fawned over Bill Clinton-As-Ex-President any more, he might burst into flames ["This Media Life: The Comeback Kid," February 5]. How convenient to completely ignore the reality that the Clintons exited Washington as a pair of embarrassing asses. Even more convenient to ignore that the first month of the Bush presidency has been a pleasant success.

Rick Singel, CINCINNATI, OHIO

Inn and Out



It was gratifying to see that two hotels for which I did the interior design were included in your February 5 cover story, "Checking Out the Inn Crowd" [by Sarah Bernard and Michael Steele]. Unfortunately, your readers were not let in on the secret. While my partner, Stephen B. Jacobs, received a nod as architect of the Hotel Giraffe and the Library Hotel, I was not recognized at all for my original design work at both establishments. In fairness, credit is certainly due for the features that give these hotels their distinct ambience and persona.

Andi Pepper, MANHATTAN

Fair Play

How easy it is to be an armchair critic. How hard it is to be Edward Albee. John Simon's vicious review of one of our greatest playwright's latest works ["Theater: Albee Damned," February 12] offended me deeply. We need our Albees. We don't need John Simon.

Roberta Meltzer Davis, PITTSBURGH, PA.

Next week: *A special issue devoted to New York gay life now. On newsstands February 26.*

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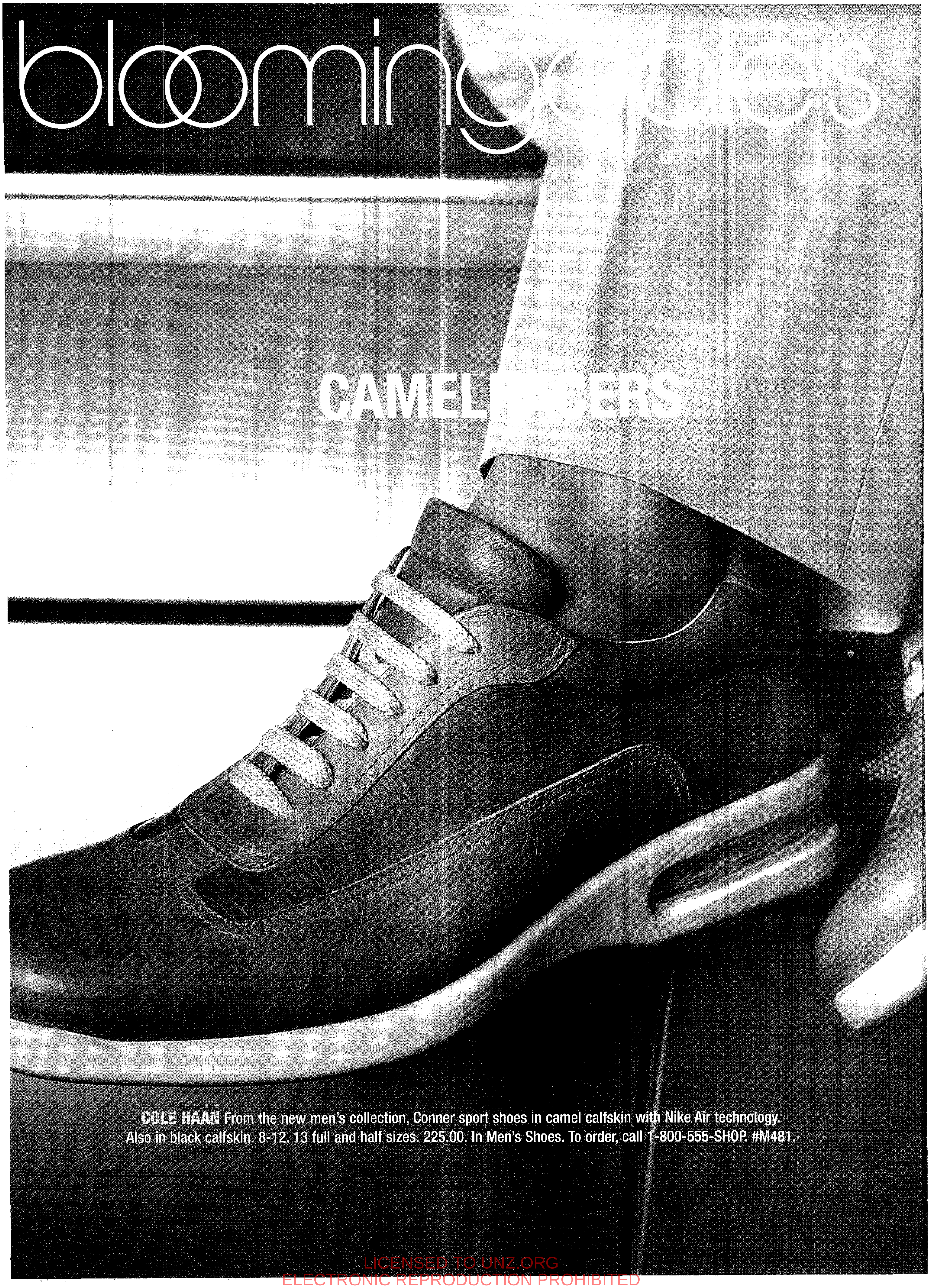
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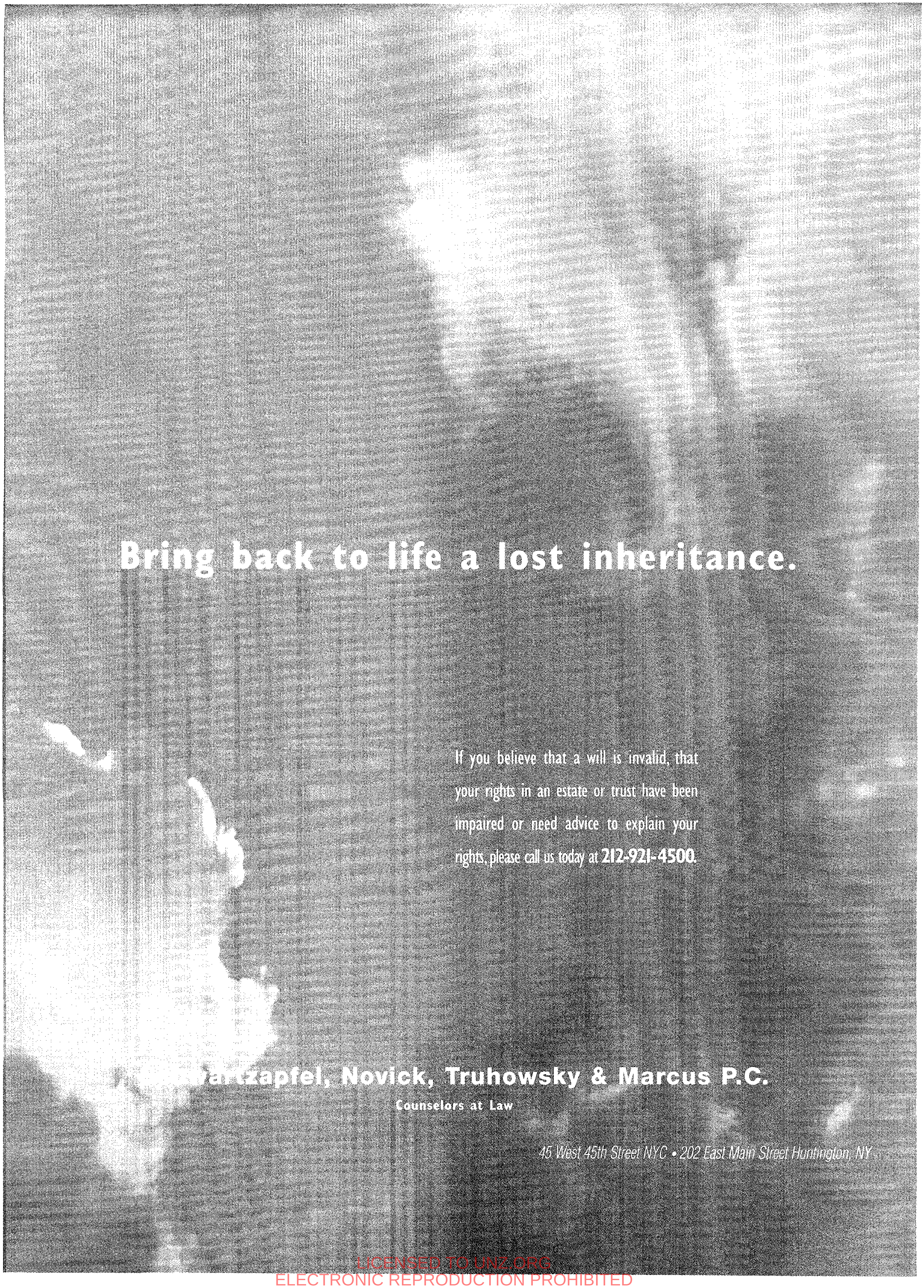

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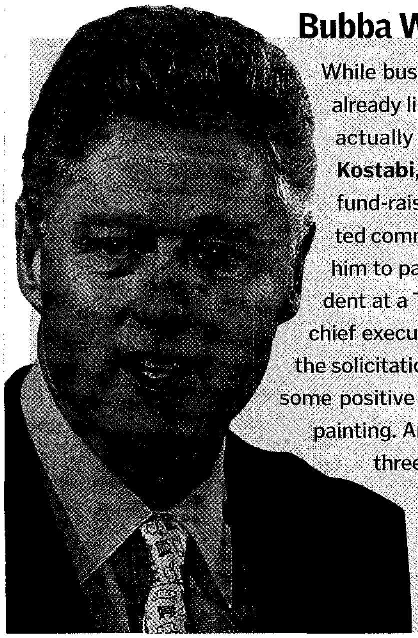


Bubba Was Framed!

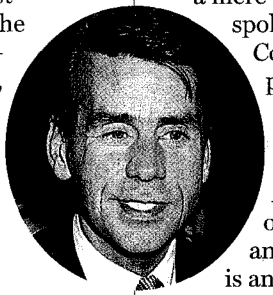
While businessman-fugitive **Marc "the Crocodile" Rousso**'s doings have already linked him to **Robert Torricelli**'s 1996 Senate run, the Croc's antics actually reached as high as the presidency. According to artist **Mark Kostabi**, Rousso—a key figure in the federal investigation of possible fund-raising violations during Torricelli's campaign, who has also admitted committing securities fraud as well as money laundering—persuaded him to paint a $10,000 portrait of **Bill Clinton** and present it to the president at a Torricelli fund-raiser in New Jersey. Federal ethics rules allow the chief executive to accept pricey gifts—except when the present is given at the solicitation of a third party. "He said it would be a good opportunity to get some positive publicity," says Kostabi. Clinton never personally accepted the painting. And while the New York *Times* reported that proceeds from some three dozen Kostabi works auctioned off at the event for about $1,000 each are still MIA, those paintings may have been just the tip of the iceberg. Kostabi tells us that the FBI is investigating what became of some 120 to 130 paintings he sold to Rousso. "He paid me $1,000 each in cash. I don't know whatever became of them." Rousso could not be reached for comment.

Rudy's $3 Million Lovefest

Maybe the key to bipartisan cooperation is just a matter of signing on the dotted line. The $3 million, two-book deal with Talk Miramax that brought **Rudy Giuliani** together with his adversaries-cum-publishers **Harvey Weinstein** and **Tina Brown** has also helped form an alliance between onetime political foes **Bruce Teitelbaum** and **Matthew Hiltzik**. Relations between mayoral aide Teitelbaum and former state Democratic spokesman Hiltzik, now Miramax's director of communications, have been less than friendly in the past. Teitelbaum has been irritated with the anti-Rudy flyers Hiltzik distributed at mayoral press events while working for the Dems; Hiltzik, on the other hand, has been annoyed with, well, Rudy. But now "we're working together and we both want the mayor's book to succeed," says a conciliatory Hiltzik. "I happen to like Matt now; he's a good guy," responds Teitelbaum. "We've found some common ground." Maybe Hillary should have made her book deal with the Heritage Foundation.

Missing McCarthy Mystifies Many

The scene of fashionistas circling the tents at Bryant Park was frenzied as usual, but one thing was decidedly different. The most powerful man in the fashion industry—**Patrick McCarthy**, the chairman and editorial director of Fairchild Publications and editor of *W* and *WWD*—was missing from his usual front-row seat. A Fairchild spokesperson confirms that the popular editor hasn't been at the office for a couple of weeks and blames the flu. "We expect him back very soon," she says.



*Post*ies Sweat Over Gym Offer

Some scribes at the New York *Post* were wringing their ink-stained fingers recently when it appeared that the paper had struck a deal with one of its favorite targets. Just days after the most recent installment of reporter **Susan Edelman**'s series of articles attacking the Bally gym chain for heavy-handed tactics in signing new clients to expensive long-term memberships, the paper's staff was offered three-year memberships to the gym for a mere $120 per year. A spokesman for News Corp., the *Post*'s parent company, explains that the offer is being made to every American branch of the business, and that the timing is an unfortunate coincidence. According to the rep, the Bally deal had already been in effect for a

Rule 36: Don't Deny You're Divorcing

Rules III (The Rules for Marriage) will hit the stores this June, and Paramount has optioned the rights to the notorious gaming guidebook for single women, but unbeknownst to her devoted followers, *author* **Ellen Fein** *is about to lose her man. She and her husband,* **Paul Feingertz**, *have both filed for divorce* for abandonment in the Supreme Court of Nassau County. When contacted, Fein—whose *Rules* include "Don't Stare at Men or Talk Too Much" and "Don't Call Him and Rarely Return His Calls"—denied that she and her husband were splitting. "We are happy and there are no papers being filed. My husband has no lawyer. I have an entertainment lawyer but no divorce lawyer," she insisted. Her attorney, however, disagrees. "There is a divorce action between Ellen and her husband. I represent Ellen," said **Stephen Gassman**. **Louis Reich**, meanwhile, confirms that he has filed for Feingertz. Yet Fein's denial continues. "There are no problems. I really can't comment. I have a client consultation now," she told us. And that, girls, costs only $150 for fifteen minutes.

Photographs: top, James M. Kelly/Globe Photos; bottom, Rose Hartman/Globe Photos.

year with the *Post*'s West Coast sister company, News Digital Media, and the offer happened to go corporation-wide shortly after Bally took its most recent beating from Edelman. The rep also assured us that the newspaper will not be backing off in its "pursuit of Bally," adding, "and that's why we love the *Post*."

Rosie Publisher Lacks the Rights Stuff

After stumping for all those striking SAG actors, **Rosie O'Donnell** can look forward to finding herself in the center of a bitter controversy involving fair pay for writers. Gruner + Jahr, which will publish the morning talker's upcoming glossy, *Rosie: The Magazine*, is on the outs with the American Society of Journalists and Authors for forcing freelancers to sign a contract with a particularly noxious clause. According to several sources, scribes taking on assignments for such G+J titles as *Child*, *Family Circle*, and *YM* were presented last year with a contract intended to retroactively slash royalties the writers had negotiated in their previous contracts. Payments for the reuse of work on the Internet, through syndication, or via reprints would be severely reduced with the new contract. "They presented it as 'Sign as is or you'll never work for us again,' " says writer **Leah Ingram**, now a *former* contributor to *Family Circle*. San Antonio *Express-News* reporter and ASJA vice-president of contracts **Richard Marini** says he reached out to G+J CEO **Dan Brewster** back in August and hasn't heard from him since. Marini also expressed his hope that Rosie would support the writers, but it now looks like it won't be necessary. After the Intelligencer contacted G+J, a company rep let us know the contract is being "revised" and will no longer apply retroactively. Don't mention it.

Anna Wintour Flees Fashion Crime Scene

Last fall, fashion darling **Miguel Adrover** earned salutes with a military-inspired collection, but at his much-pooh-poohed show last week, he could have used the National Guard. We hear the crowd that assembled before Adrover's runway affair on Essex Street sent an agoraphobic **Anna Wintour** packing. According to writer **Bruce Benderson**, the *Vogue* grande dame pulled up with a friend to the Lower East Side mob scene in a black chauffeur-driven car. Says Benderson: "She came out in a Dolce & Gabbana coat and hovered on the periphery of the crowd like a nervous moth for not more than three minutes," after which she "handed her invitation to a young girl and fled back to the limo." Wintour's rep confirmed that she bolted, but denied that she handed off her ticket. We hope she found a seat at Michael's.

HBO's Charitable Bent

Good Machine, the production company behind HBO's movie version of the Off Broadway play *The Laramie Project*, is looking for a slew of celebrity cameos for the upcoming film—and it's using a novel approach to bring the stars onboard. Apparently, producers have told actors that if they donate their fees to a charity, the company will match the contribution. Since *The Laramie Project* is based on the Matthew Shepard hate-crime story, it's no wonder that there is a charitable air surrounding the film's production. As producer **Ted Hope** told us, "It seemed like a wonderful way to give back to the community at large." Although Hope could not confirm the names of actors who will be appearing in the film, he added, "The actors who said yes were saying yes for the right reasons."

Two Scotts Dive Into Swamp

With the Hamptons summer land-grab in full swing, a legendary hot spot has just gone off the market. An East End informant tells us that the gay Club Swamp and the Annex Restaurant—for sale for two years—finally have new owners. Two young New York–based men (who will reveal that they're both named **Scott**—no surnames, please—and that they work in public relations and on Wall Street) are in contract to purchase the restaurant and disco. The club will be renamed, uh, Swa (pronounced "sway"), and major renovations are in the works. The pair are looking to create a more loungey, upscale feel for the Swamp and import D.J.'s from South Beach. **Linda Batincela**, a current proprietress of the club and restaurant, says that she will stay on board in a management role for at least a year, so regular patrons like **Randolph Duke** and **Isaac Mizrahi** are sure to see a familiar face.

Wooing Albright: Tina's Private Urban Fetch

Anyone who says working for **Tina Brown** is no bed of roses ought to check with one of her top editors. According to a source close to *Talk*, features editor **Charles Gandee** received a call from the boss at home near dawn recently, expressing an urgent need for flowers. It seemed **Madeline Albright** was coming to the office that day to discuss a possible book deal—the rights to which Brown did indeed end up scoring—and the place had to look *just so*. Ever the good soldier, the eminently stylish Gandee quickly dispatched his assistant to a local flower market, cell phone in hand, and the two men determined the appropriate flora for the former secretary of State: two big vases of tulips. Notes a rep for the mag, "Hey, it worked."

Additional reporting by Aric Chen and Paige Herman.

Photographs: top, Robin Platzer/Twin Images; bottom, Rose Hartman/Globe Photos.

The City Politic

Last Tuesday night, upstairs at No. 9 in the East Village, the legendary smoke-filled room was reborn. The occasion was a party celebrating the publication of *Hillary's Turn,* a narrative about **Hillary Clinton**'s Senate campaign by *New York*'s own **Michael Tomasky**, and in attendance was a cross section of New York's political and journalistic Establishment. "When can I roast you?" Gracie Mansion hopeful **Alan Hevesi** asked Tomasky. "I have a roast ready." **Mark Green**, another hopeful, his political skills very much in evidence, told Tomasky that he'd tried to buy the book but that it'd been sold out at Barnes & Noble. Journalists like *The Nation*'s **Victor Navasky** and **Katrina vanden Heuvel**, NY1's **Andrew Kirtzman**, and New York *Times* political columnist **Gail Collins** suppressed the instinct to take out their notebooks. Meanwhile, Hillary's campaign communications director, **Howard Wolfson**, and most of her press staff huddled in a tight knot—not that anyone should accuse them of being in a defensive formation.

French Dressing

"I've just always *preferred* America!" **Lloyd Klein**, the very tan French designer, exclaimed as he surveyed the plush, chintzy Park Avenue living room of **Laura Steinberg**, where a cocktail party was being held on February 7 in honor of his Fashion Week show. "Ah," Klein said, eyeing a plate of cold cuts. "I even love the *food*!" Shiny, well-kept women—**Arrianna von Hohenloe**, **Sylvia Niarchos**, and **Nicky Hilton** among them—modeled and mugged for snapshots. Hilton pulled back the lapels of her fuchsia satin coat to show a turquoise T-shirt bearing a dimpled blonde cartoon character. "Lloyd thought it was me," she said, rolling her eyes. "It's astrology. I'm a *Scorpio*." AMY LAROCCA

Photographs by Patrick McMullan

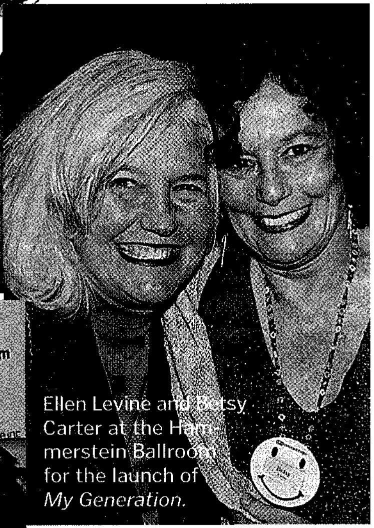
Shoshanna Lonstein and Scott Wolf at B-Bar & Grill for the launch of Lonstein's new swimwear line.

Ronde Barber, Dave Zinczenko, and Tiki Barber at Lotus for *Men's Health*'s Fashion Week party.

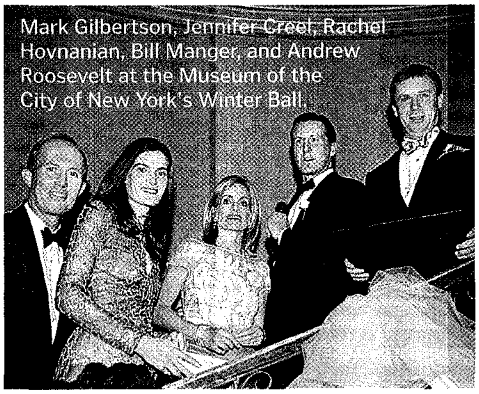
Alan Hevesi and Michael Tomasky at No. 9.

Howard Wolfson and Karen Dunn at No. 9.

Elizabeth Fekkai, Lloyd Klein, and Laura Steinberg at Steinberg's apartment for a party honoring Klein.


Ellen Levine and Betsy Carter at the Hammerstein Ballroom for the launch of *My Generation.*

Gloria Steinem, Glenn Close, and Eve Ensler at Madison Square Garden for "Take Back the Garden," a benefit performance of *The Vagina Monologues.*


Mark Gilbertson, Jennifer Creel, Rachel Hovnanian, Bill Manger, and Andrew Roosevelt at the Museum of the City of New York's Winter Ball.

Kenzo Hashimoto and Carole A. Feuerman at the Lobby Gallery for an exhibition of Feuerman's sculpture.

Harlem of honey and chocolate and caramel and rum and vinegar and lemon and lime and gall—Langston Hughes

GOTHAM

Edited by Andrew Lee and Carl Swanson

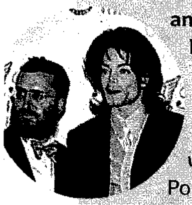
G SPOTS

THIS WEEK IN NYC

Puffy and J. Lo officially split: After weeks of speculation, it's finally announced. And now the hip-hop mogul wants you to "respect his privacy." Or someone might pull a gun.

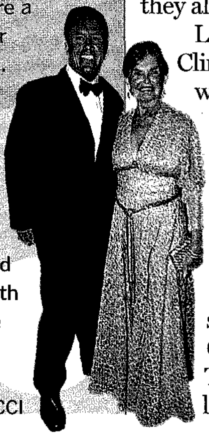
Brooklyn Museum of Art: A new exhibit features a naked female Christ. After Giuliani drove them out of Times Square, the strippers had to go *somewhere*.

Bill Bratton endorses Mark Green: "It's Mark Green time!" just doesn't have the same ring to it.



Rabbi Shmuley Boteach and Michael Jackson: For the Heal the Kids foundation, the author of *Kosher Sex* teams up with the King of Pop. Funny, he doesn't look Jewish.

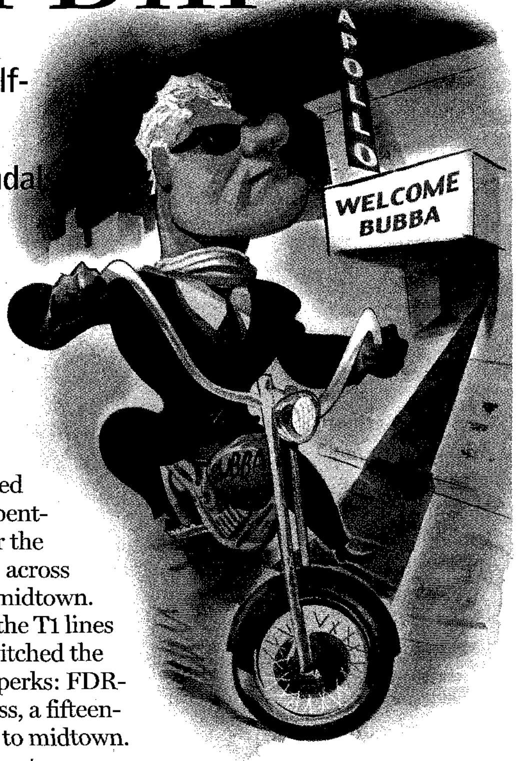
Bichon Frises: The breed of the Westminster dog-show champ. Somewhere a Jack Russell terrier weeps bitter tears.



Leona Helmsley: The 80-year-old fires exec Patrick Ward, 45, after hearing he's gay and not really in love with her. Apparently one Helmsley queen is enough.

GUY NICOLUCCI

Uptown Bill



Terry Lane led Clinton to his Harlem Self-Empowerment Zone, where the ex-president explains how these new scandals aren't really his fault. By Robert Kolker

It's an age-old New York real-estate bind: You find the perfect place, you fall in love and declare your intentions—only to learn it's promised to someone else. When it happened in Harlem last week to office-seeker Bill Clinton, it fell upon Terry Lane—the head of New York's Empowerment Zone, who'd arranged Clinton's introduction to 55 West 125th Street at the behest of Congressman Charles Rangel—to help close the deal. "When I looked at the space, the owners said others had 'expressed interest,' " says the 38-year-old former investment banker. "They didn't say that they already leased it."

Lane decided not to tell Clinton about it and waited until after the former president's adulatory tour of Harlem to deal with the problem. But he remained confident that Clinton would eventually win the space. He served as Clinton's host last Tuesday, and he saw the look in the ex-president's eyes when he walked through the travertine marble lobby and up the elevator and gazed out of the open penthouse views over the roofs of Harlem, across Central Park to midtown. Lane explained the T1 lines to Clinton and pitched the neighborhood's perks: FDR-free airport access, a fifteen-minute taxi ride to midtown. "I told him I'd love to go jogging with him, and he said he'd love a workout partner," Lane says. He might have clinched the deal on the way down, when Lane idly mentioned the building could put a presidential seal on the floor of the elevator they were in. Clinton beamed and said, "That would be nice."

Outside, Clinton used Lane's shoulder for support as he glad-handed the happy mob that greeted him. "He looked radiant," Lane says. They and their entourages bonded over a two-hour-plus lunch at Bayou, an Empowerment Zone–funded restaurant, where, over turkey andouille sausage, Clinton defended the Marc Rich pardon—explaining that top members of both parties had beseeched him to do it.

And it was there that Clinton, certain he had found a New York home base, proudly described the $800,000-per-month Carnegie Hall Tower flap as the result of his own success. "He said that eight years ago, they probably rented that place for below $40 a square foot," Lane says. "But thanks to the strong economy he and Bob Rubin and Lloyd Bentsen created, they could charge higher rents now."

Photographs: from top, Andrea Renault/Globe Photos; Patrick McMullan. Illustrated by Eric Palma.

Retail

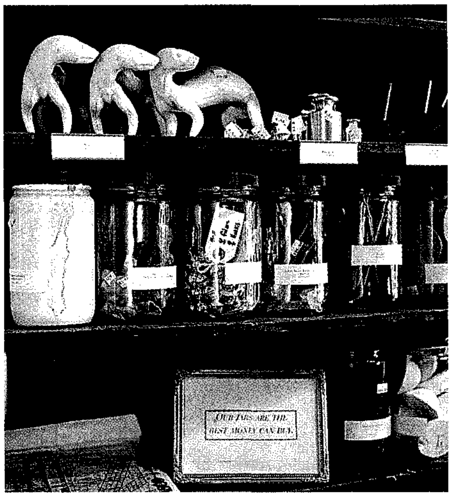
What Price Irony?

On a recent afternoon in Park Slope, a father and son stopped at an unmarked store window at the quiet southern end of Seventh Avenue to admire a five-and-a-half-foot-tall corkscrewed train set. The boy began jumping up and down—"Daddy, I want a train! Will you get me a train?"

"I don't know what they sell here, son," the man said. "But they don't sell train sets."

The tiny former locksmith's shop is crammed floor-to-ceiling with a menagerie of oddities, including pewter birds' claws, boxes of small rubber cubes, "male" and "female" gavels, and eyeless white taxidermy mannequins of curious weasels. Identical cans of Sullivan's Tail Adhesive are tagged at $25.99, $10, and $3.50.

What the store's peddling isn't so much unusual merchandise as a kind of Fluxus whimsy, the self-described "goofy optimism" promoted by Dave Eggers in his literary journal, *McSweeney's*. And in fact, Amie Barrodale, the store's shy 24-year-old proprietor, is a *McSweeney's* assistant editor. "Did you see this diorama?" Barrodale asks, pointing to an aquarium-size display entitled *Police Officers Walking on Water*. It's not for sale. But you *can* rent Tip-Toe dancing shoes, which have the heel on the toe, by the half-hour. Or storage space for "physical education documents." There's also a lost-and-found for gloves. Small signs gleefully make pronouncements like POLICY: DIORAMAS ARE FOR SILENT ENJOYMENT. NO COMMENTING PLEASE. Or: NO CHILD LIFTING. NO EXCEPTIONS!



Barrodale has feverishly worked on the store for five months, culling stock from the Internet and specialty magazines, with some help from Eggers and *McSweeney's* interns. Not *everybody* in the neighborhood gets it. "The locksmith told some people I was part of a cult," she says, sighing.

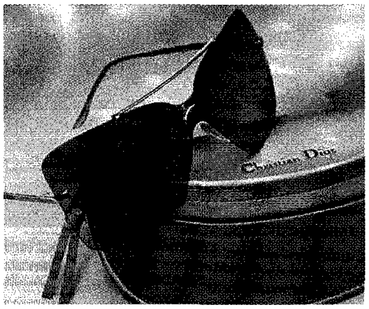
There are no signs in the window and no plans to advertise. (At first, Barrodale tried to ward off *New York*'s photographer by putting three CLOSED signs on the door.) The store says that its ideal customer is "a 13-year-old kid who listens to music with headphones on. Or people who read the encyclopedia. The wrongly imprisoned." But, Barrodale says, "I'm most excited about the people who wander in here and don't know what's going on."

HUNTER KENNEDY

Object Lesson

You *Will* Be Wearing These

What: Christian Dior's new spring sunglasses—which range from lightweight aviators to rhinestone-studded wraparounds—have barely hit the counters at Saks, but already . . . they're *everywhere*. **Who's wearing them:** Last week during the fashion shows, the shades helped editors like *Vibe*'s Memsor Kamaraké and celeb stylist Patti Wilson avoid eye contact. At a recent photo shoot, Lenny Kravitz was so enamored of a pair that he kept them. The boys of 'N Sync donned the eyewear at the Billboard Awards, as did Elizabeth Hurley at Sundance. **Why they have them and you don't:** Do all these bold-faced names simply share the same impeccable taste? Probably not. Like bowling bags and tiny cell phones before them, the success of Dior's glasses is the happy by-product of aggressive marketing: Sixty lucky fashion editors received them from luggage label Tumi, and magnanimous Dior reps have been handing them out to trendsetters. "Next season," gushes its spokesperson, "you're going to see Dior *everywhere*." It's already too late.

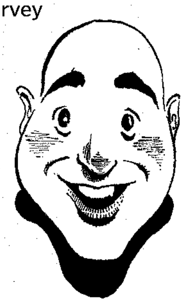


ARIC CHEN

THE BIG QUESTION

If there were an Oscar for Best Hype, who would win?

Frank DeCaro, "Out at the Movies" correspondent, *The Daily Show:* "Harvey Weinstein at Miramax, for giving the Academy a *Chocolat* buzz just a year after forcing them to drink *Cider*."



Harry Knowles, head geek, aintitcool.com: "I think clothing is overhyped at the Oscars. It should be optional."

Andrew Sasson, nightlife impresario-restaurateur: "Guy Ritchie. I haven't seen *Snatch* yet, but he deserves to win just for timing his marriage to Madonna to coincide with his film's release."

Jordan Roth, producer, *The Rocky Horror Show*: "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*—phenomenal, considering it's in Chinese with subtitles."

Matthew Kenney, co-owner, Canteen and Commune: "As I'm a chef, my heart belongs to *Chocolat*."

Lucianne Goldberg, radio host: "The Clintons! He's been out of office for three weeks, and we're realizing we were all sold a bill of goods—and there's much more to come."

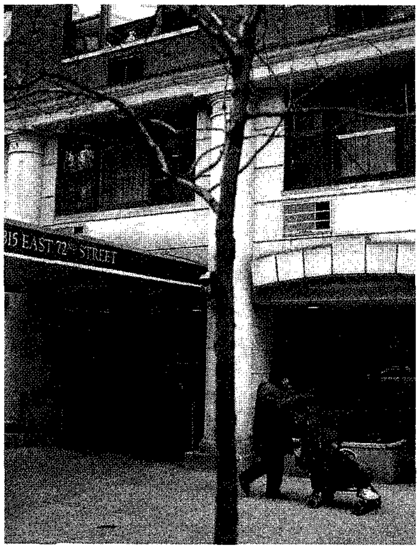
Photographs: from top, Lenora Gim; courtesy of Christian Dior. Illustrated by Michael Witte.

Praise the Board!

As apartment prices went up, boards became more and more demanding. Now, as the boom fades, will it turn out they were right all along?

For every New Economy winner who got turned down by a co-op, there's a board worrying whether it was restrictive enough. Boards have been getting pickier for the past few years—"They get people to undress in front of them," grouses one broker—but with a recession looming, their snoopiness could suddenly seem smart.

"The hot real-estate market afforded the luxury of turning down buyers," says Fox Residential's Diane Dickinson. But "a market slowdown can prove that co-op boards have had long-term financial health in mind all along." To ensure that health, some boards are now requiring four times the price of the property in liquid assets—not an easy mark when average apartment prices in Manhattan are creeping toward a million bucks. They used to require two to three.



Even co-ops without snooty aspirations have gotten tougher. Many learned hard lessons from the early-nineties real-estate bust. Take 315 East 72nd Street (pictured), which went co-op in 1986. By the time the recession hit in 1991, it was $14 million in debt. The sponsor's failing financial condition meant it couldn't make its maintenance payments, so banks stopped lending money to potential buyers. Those units that did sell went at bargain prices.

"We've learned our lesson," says board treasurer David Ross, who's also a Citibank vice-president. Now 315 often requires maintenance in escrow and guarantors.

Day-traders need not apply. "We don't want to see people tied up in volatile investing," says Ross. "Boards are much more concerned with money made in technology in the last few years," says Ashforth Warburg's Richard Steinberg. "Money that's come from California. That's the kiss of death." JUDY GROVER

Rock Around the Block

Virgin Territory

After buying at the end of last year, **Britney Spears** has moved into a duplex in the Silk Building, where, with luck, she'll get more satisfaction than previous musical residents Keith Richards, Cher, and Cyndi Lauper. Although it was reported she was moving to Union Square ("Oops!"), her duplex is on lower Broadway above Tower Records, a great spot to keep on top of record sales. The Corcoran Group's Alida Rubin helped slip the 1,400-square-foot, $900,000 two-bedroom in Britney's teeny-weeny pocket. Before she moved, Britney spearheaded her renovation by knocking down walls and buying antiques for a more homey feel. Not content to let teen pop stars have all the fun, **Billy Joel** is close to settling back in the Hamptons (after selling his old manse to Seinfeld for $32 million last year). Brokers say he's set to close a deal for a place on Three Mile Harbor that comes with its own private island. The price is said to be under $10 million, which begs the question: What's he going to do with the other $22 million? MORGAN GOLDBERG

Big Deals

Upper East Side

200 East 65th Street

3-bed, 3.5-bath, 2,500-square-foot condo. Ask: $2.9 million. Sell: $2.5 million. Charges and taxes: $3,837. Seven months on market.

When it comes to home-buying, even real-estate boy-mogul Eric Hadar, who recently dropped $725 million on the Citigroup Center, needed some help from Mom. He'd been renting, and "he didn't have a lot of time to look because he's been so busy wheeling and dealing," said his proud mom, William B. May's Margery Hadar. Unsurprisingly for a man who buys skyscrapers, "he wanted lots of space in an upper-floor condo with views and high ceilings." Now he and his wife, Allison, are planning to gut-renovate to make the space more "loftlike." Not only did Mom find her son the new seven-room spread in the Bristol, but "as a housewarming present, I flipped back my cut of the commission." CHRISTOPHER TENNANT

Upper West Side

215 West 91st Street

3-bed, 3-bath co-op. Ask: $1.15 million. Sell: $1.1 million. Maintenance: $1,649. Two months on market.

Even this building's name, the DeSoto, has a classic West Side ring to it—like where Alvy Singer might live. This apartment still has its 1916 moldings, nine-foot ceilings, nifty old glass doors, and an eat-in kitchen with checkerboard tiles. "The buyers were so impressed, they paid in cash," says Prudential MLBKaye's Marilyn Kaye, who brokered the sale. JOY ARMSTRONG

Photographs: top, Sean Hemmerle; bottom, Robin Platzer/Twin Images.

Maybe I was supposed to get Parkinson's.

Maybe the last 20 years were just a warm-up for this moment. After all, my career has given me a certain stature (even for a short guy). And people seem to pay attention when I speak. So listen to this: Of all the brain disorders, Parkinson's is the one that scientists truly believe may be closest to a cure. Yet it remains severely underfunded. In fact, with enough funding, they feel they can crack it within 10 years. And if they can cure Parkinson's, then similar diseases like Alzheimer's, Huntington's, and ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) may not be far behind. You can help make that happen. Go to my Web site. Or call to make a donation. You have the power to wipe out this disease. To affect millions of lives. Okay, okay. I'll get off my soapbox now.

THE MICHAEL J. FOX
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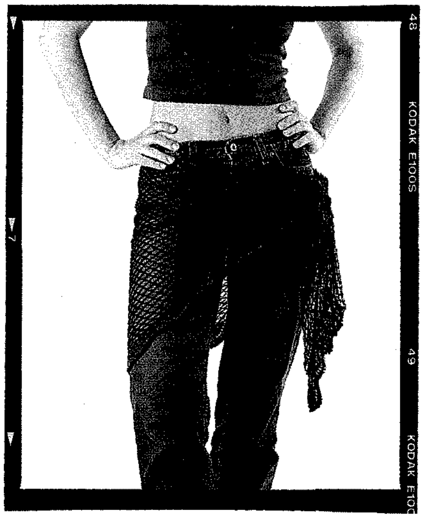
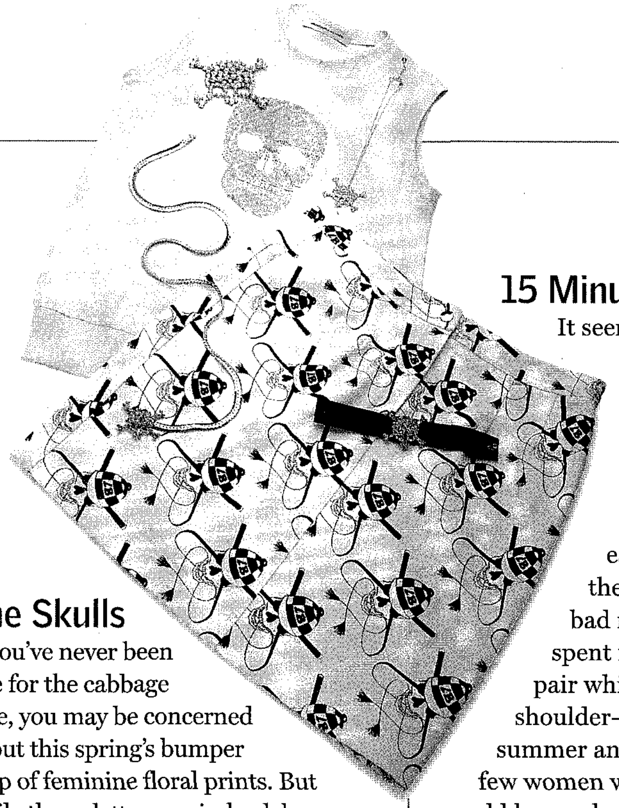
Make a donation today. Visit www.michaeljfox.org or call 1-800-708-7644.

Style AMY LAROCCA

Sarong Song

Your winter clothes look dingy, and it's still too cold to wear spring's fripperies. Enter the lacy, beaded shawl. It looks intended for opera-going, but it's been spotted everywhere—including in *Save the Last Dance*—worn sarong-style over jeans and this season's ubiquitous leggings. "It's the last addition to an outfit," says Rebecca Apsan, who sells hand-crocheted versions at La Petite Coquette ($165; 51 University Place). "You can throw it over anything—or wear it over nothing if you want to seduce someone." Winona Ryder and Kylie Bax are among the fashion-hungry who grabbed up the first 200 at that store. (More are on order.) It'll get you through the Ides of March at least. BETH LANDMAN KEIL





The Skulls

If you've never been one for the cabbage rose, you may be concerned about this spring's bumper crop of feminine floral prints. But while the palette may, indeed, be pastel, there are prints out there for those who like their fabrics a little more . . . *scary*. Skulls—as in Jolly Rogers, crossbones included—are showing their creepy, skinless faces on clothes all over the city. They're in Luella Bartley's collection, peppering miniskirt suits and otherwise sweet sherbet-colored blouses with matching ties ($250–$1,000 at Henri Bendel, 712 Fifth Avenue). And Noir, by Leeora Catalan, has done a collection of rhinestone jewelry in the shape of skulls—brooches, pendants, cuff bracelets. "We're calling it 'elegant punk,' and we're putting it on *everything*," says Catalan. Can eye patches and peg legs be far behind?

15 Minutes . . .

It seems like only yesterday that fashion girls were clamoring for uptown (as in north of 96th Street) style, but in recent weeks big, gold J. Lo hoop earrings have seen their stock plummet—bad news for anyone who spent more than $12 on a pair while they were at their shoulder-grazing peak this summer and fall. "There are a few women who can *always* wear gold hoops, because they are beyond fashion's rules," says Michelle Kessler Sanders, accessories director at *Vogue*. "For the rest of us, it's better to invest in something original." So what instead? "Cartier from the forties and fifties is so elegant!" Sanders says, "or anything from Tom Binns's latest collection." Those who've been burned recently should, of course, wait for the $12 knockoffs to hit Canal Street.

Smart Set

Robin Kramer

If you are at all style-conscious, and live in New York, it is more than likely that you've been in an environment created entirely by Robin Kramer at least once. The former head of merchandising at Calvin Klein, Kramer now runs a branding-design firm—in other words, you can bring her your company, however outmoded, and she will reconstruct its image from start to finish, right down to the handles on the dressing-room doors. She will consult on your clothing line or build your flagship boutique from scratch: the lighting, how you should fold shirts and display ties, who the employees should be, where they should stand to greet the customers. Right now, Kramer is at work reconfiguring Barneys. Having already designed its Co-op boutique and bridal atelier, she's now moving the cosmetic department into the old Fred's space in the basement (there will be a new restaurant on the ground floor). She's also designing Donna Karan's new Madison Avenue store and Waterworks' expansion and giving Arche—the comfortable-shoe company—a stylish new image. But who would Kramer really love to get her hands on? "American Airlines," she says, wrinkling her nose at the thought of its utilitarian ticket envelopes and standard-issue silverware. "I mean, there's just no reason it can't be . . . better."

Photographs: clockwise from top, Andrew McCaul; Milan Ryba/Globe Photos; Noah Sheldon; Andrew McCaul.

This week, we'll be on the phone guiding some of America's wealthiest families.

Today, the same invitation is open to you.

THE
BANK OF
NEW
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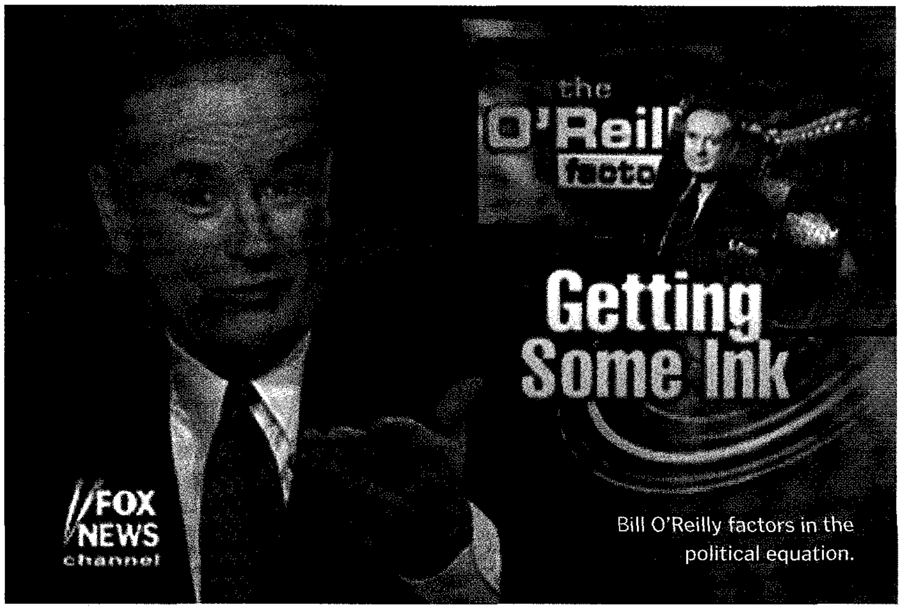
Michael Wolff THIS MEDIA LIFE

The Party Line

At Fox, the news isn't just partisan but *gleefully* partisan: conservative, red-in-the-face news narrowcast to the red states. And it's killing the competition.

SOME PEOPLE THINK FOX NEWS IS ON THE verge of creating the kind of revolution that CNN made ten years ago—altering the basic habits and assumptions of why and how we watch news.

It's certainly been killing the competition. On a series of big events, Fox—with its narrowcast approach—has taken larger ratings than its nonsectarian brothers (and, of course, Bill O'Reilly, one of the Fox hosts, has a celebrity book that's competing with the various books of the network anchors). Starting with the Republican convention in July, building with each debate, then with notable peaks during the Florida phase of the election, and followed by Inauguration Day, Fox trumped both MSNBC and CNN. Now, it's true that these events are all Republican-focused, but that's the fear: In a Republican era, the Republicans will have a monopoly on such events—and so will Fox.



Bill O'Reilly factors in the political equation.

Or, really, what happens is that the Republicans will have enthusiasm for the news and will be eager to tune in to play-by-play coverage and postgame analysis, while the larger but less engaged (or more dispirited) Democratic and agnostic audience will forsake the news.

This is already a big transformation in the way we see the news: Republican news versus Democratic news. News, in other words, becomes not so much about the event itself but about how we identify with the event. We want our own spin.

It's the European way—every newspaper, every news outlet, has its proud bias. There's left-of-center news; there's reconstructed-Communist news; there's hard-line-Communist news; there's Christian Democrat news; there's neo-fascist news. It's the nineteenth-century way—every paper a party paper.

Or you can look at it in exactly the opposite fashion: The larger trend is a systemic erosion of the audience for Washington-government-policy-politician-oriented news. But while CNN, MSNBC, and the networks are casualties of the militant disinterest in political news, Fox is the beneficiary. Except rather than Fox's success representing some new ideological trend in America, it suggests the extreme winnowing of the politics-focused audience, and that the only audience left is one with a peculiar attachment to politics.

Ideological purity, in other words, meets media purity. In a highly competitive market, you want to focus on a core interest group, which, by the nature of its obsession, is an audience that is easy to attract, easy to hold, easy to service.

The networks, along with CNN and MSNBC, continue to represent the dispassionate tradition. This fifties-sixties-seventies-eighties objective norm came about because in a three-network world, the idea of broadcasting as a public trust had great currency (and the force of government regulation), and because the accusation of a liberal bias in the media was as dogged and widespread as it was true—hence the news was buttoned-down in tone and blurred in point of view.

But in a fragmented media world, that tradition can be a commercial disadvantage. What it means is that without a pointed bias, a single-minded reason for existing, a clear and persuasive shtick, you're left to court a general-interest audience. This is an audience that demands wide variety, and constant new forms of stimulation (*expensive* stimulation), is fickle in its interests, and, because it lacks any sort of emotional attachment to what you have to offer, is easily attracted by somebody else's clearer sell.

CNN, in its early incarnation, grabbed the easy-to-grab news-focused audience. But the thing about the notion of targeted media is that someone can always target you finer. The success of an all-news network invites an all-sports-news network (and then an all-golf network), an all-entertainment-news network (and then an all-hip-hop network), and, obviously, an all-conservative-news network.

I DOUBT, THOUGH, THAT THIS IS WHAT MURdoch had in mind. I think he thought he'd

Photographs courtesy of Fox News Channel.

create a head-to-head, competitive 24-hour-news broadcast organization. If Turner could do it, he could do it; if G.E. and Microsoft were going to go for it, he was, too; plus, Murdoch just wasn't going to cede the market to Time Warner after it bought Turner.

So when chairman Roger Ailes, at the launch of the Fox News Channel in 1996, said, "We'll have more live news and produced programming than either CNN or MSNBC," and that Fox would be more "balanced" in its reporting than the other networks, that opinion programming would be clearly distinguished from straight news reporting, he may have meant it (sort of, anyway).

But from the beginning, there was something embattled about Fox (indeed, it had to fight Time Warner for space on its cable systems). It was almost a class thing. Fox was trailer-camp life on Sixth Avenue. Moldy food in the green room, and, even in the world of television, women with way too much eye makeup. For a period last year, Fox, alone among news stations, refused to send cars for its guests (the Fox guests tend to be far enough down the guest pecking order to be willing to get there on their own). And, for on-air talent, you didn't go to Fox—at least until recently—because you had alternatives. (After Fox, you hit Court TV.) Not only was Fox on the tail end of talent, but it was on the tail end of news. One Fox producer recounts having to carry his footage from satellite truck to satellite truck at the site of a European terrorist attack, begging for an upload to New York.

So on the one hand, you had a deep lack of resources and clout; on the other hand, you had the standard television imperative—mimic the competition, be as broad as possible. But then you had Roger Ailes—the purest melding of media and politics. He's one of the few political consultants to actually come out of television. He meets Nixon in 1967 on the set of *The Mike Douglas Show*, which he is producing. After Nixon (Ailes is the most vivid character in Joe McGinniss's book *The Selling of the President 1968*, about the Nixon campaign), he closely counsels Reagan and Bush. Then, out of power in the Clinton years, he runs CNBC and launches America's Talking, the precursor to MSNBC, before joining Fox.

Media professionals and political consultants have a fundamentally contrary view. The media professional—the writer, reporter, producer, anchor—believes that politics is of large concern to a broad number of people, or if it isn't, then it should be; that our job is to force-feed the public. The political consultant, on the other hand, recognizes the uniquely specialized nature of politics. That people are almost never interested in politics in general, but in their own self-interest and bias; that, in fact, fewer and fewer people are interested in politics in any shape or form; that it's a shrinking market. Nonvoters, non-newspaper readers, nonparticipants, are the growth industry. Still, you have a core group of enthusiasts that remains loyal and strong—reaching it is the job.

While this is as true on the left (from anti-WTO-ists to the free-Mumia crowd) as on the right, in pure media terms, the right is a much easier audience to reach and to hold. Conservatives are older and more settled in their political views and media habits; they are more rural and hence less restless in their pursuit of diversion; they are more anchored to their families and to their homes and to their televisions; they are more homogeneous in their interests—it's easier to speak to them as one. Plus, and this should not be underestimated, they feel, largely because it's true, that the world is against them. That what they believe in is going away. That they are endangered. This creates a powerful bond.

"There's **something embattled about Fox.** It's a class thing, trailer-camp life on Sixth Avenue."

FOX, HAVING SUCCESSFULLY EXPLOITED THIS bond, is flush with success. And success has made it trumpet ever more confidently its view of the world.

In that view, Bill Clinton is the twentieth century's most preposterous joke (one thing that distinguishes Fox from other news channels is that it's actually funny—they have a good time on Fox); Ronald Reagan is the century's paramount leader (at the moment, Fox seems to be conducting an ongoing living funeral for the former president); and, most important, it's the other networks that are biased—liberal-biased—rather than Fox (what bias Fox has is merely a counterweight—hence George Bush's cousin got a key role on Election Night in the Fox newsroom).

In the Fox world, you'll find Newt Gingrich, Dick Morris, Pat Robertson—who, however discredited or marginalized in the larger world, are still bigger-than-life on Fox. You'll find a ragtag bunch of Democrats who have come out for tax cuts, or recanted one or another liberal orthodoxy—all with hairpieces askew and, clearly, alcohol on their breath (the Fox vision of Democrats). And you'll meet the world's most tongue-tied liberals and neo-socialists (none of whom you've ever heard of), the straw men for O'Reilly to knock down. It's a chip-on-the-shoulder, love-of-mother, red-in-the-face, *Reader's Digest,* Irish Catholic world (although, in fact, its audience tends toward southern and western Protestants).

Fox is the red states, and CNN and MSNBC the blue.

The intuitive view, though, has been that the Bush victory will make it more difficult for Fox, that it takes away its reason for being, that it's the Clinton thing that fueled the channel's good fortune. But then the inauguration numbers killed.

Now, the counterview is that while Fox may lose something without Clinton, traditional news loses something more by having Bush. If the overriding trend is a diminished interest in politics, Bush, by his calculated or inherent blandness, by his aversion to conflict, his disengagement, makes politics even less interesting.

It's the fickle, general-interest public that tunes out first.

The core Republican audience holds.

OF COURSE, THE MOST SOPHISTICATED MEDIA view—which in some sense goes to the heart of Republican resentment—is to question what exactly the Fox audience, this older, downwardly mobile, less acquisitive demographic, is worth. From an advertisers' point of view, you're talking Preparation H wipes and Mylanta. You're not talking mobile telephony and a wide array of entertainment products.

In other words, we are at the fundamental schism in American cultural, political, and economic life. There's the quicker-growing, economically vibrant, but also more fractious and more difficult to manage, morally relativist, urban-oriented, culturally adventuresome, sexually polymorphous, and ethnically diverse nation (Bill Clinton's America, if you will). And there's the small-town, nuclear-family, religiously oriented, white-centric other America, which makes up for its diminishing cultural and economic force with its predictability and stability (the GWB-ies).

This is not by any means a new schism. There have always been two countries—we just haven't had the bandwidth to create parallel media nations. ■

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Michael Tomasky THE CITY POLITIC

What's the Big Idea?

Lacking a major threat—fiscal crisis, racial disharmony, San Pellegrino drought—the mayoral wannabes struggle to define what they're running for (or against).

I'M FEELING A LITTLE SORRY FOR THE mayoral candidates. True, they've all been around a long time, reliably but unspectacularly, like *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding*. True, as this magazine noted last week, they have the misfortune of being sandwiched between Hillary—a major production in several acts—and the anticipated Shakespearean slugfest of the gubernatorial race.

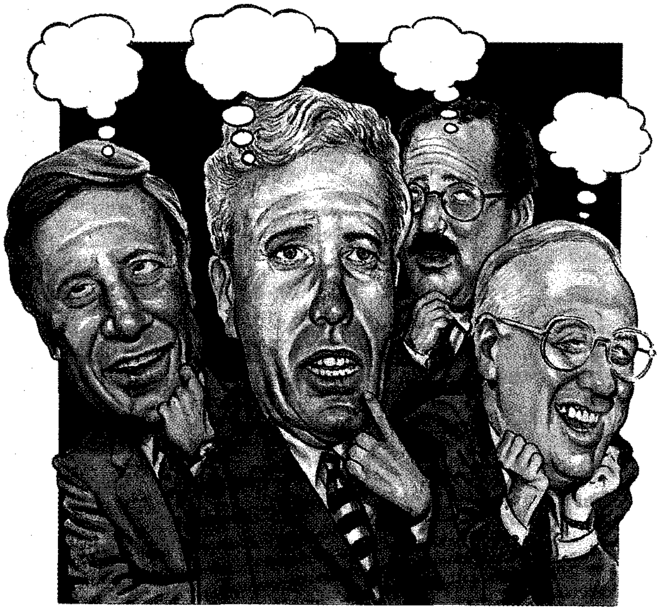
But I think there's another reason they aren't doing much box office, a reason that is no reflection on them at all.

There's no crisis.

Crisis is what makes people pay attention. Crisis also provides candidates with a raison d'être; it makes the city agree that there's this one really big, emotionally resonant problem that the next mayor absolutely must be equipped to address. In 1989, it was the racial crisis, the overwhelming sense that we needed healing. Hence, Dinkins. By 1993, it was the crime crisis. Hence, Giuliani. Each won by a razor-thin margin, but still, each was, in his way, the right person for the moment.

To get people interested, a candidacy needs a big idea. Today, however, no single question dominates the municipal conversation. So, fellas, in purely objective, alphabetical order, what's your Big Idea?

Fernando Ferrer: "The reason for my candidacy is that there needs to be fundamental change, not playing around at the margins. The needs are too enormous, and the divisions are too deep . . . The idea of my candidacy is that, as an officer of this city and a New Yorker, I'm offended by the divisions, by playing one community off against the other, one interest group off against the other. That doesn't need to be."



Seekers: From left, Vallone, Green, Ferrer, Hevesi.

Mark Green: "I don't accept the premise that candidates should be seen through the lens of Rudy Giuliani. I reject this simplistic post-Giuliani bipolarization that requires candidates to be either General Patton or Mr. Rogers. There's a new way to run and govern that ideally will produce someone who's tough and smart, and can be persuasive in boardrooms and civic meetings, with beat cops and high-school seniors. The city needs a mayor who leads by consensus."

Alan Hevesi: "I see two conjoined themes about the governance of the city in the next ten years. First, we're in the twenty-first century, an incredibly complex world with new technologies, a truly global society. Second, we are the most ethnically diverse city in the history of the world. The obligation of the next mayor is to deal with this complexity and diversity . . . I think New Yorkers feel things are better than they were eight years ago, but they're nervous."

Peter Vallone: "I don't think we're in a crisis. But we are in a situation where we know what needs to be done, and no one seems to know how to do it, with regard to the education system, or the fact that we're short 200,000 units of affordable housing. I'm the only one who has governed every day. I think everyone will agree that I've always been able to work things out, with three different mayors, whatever the problems were."

Here's each, translated. Ferrer's pitch is the most purely mathematical—it's targeted to a core constituency that will vote in a Democratic primary and that, if it holds as an electoral coalition, stands a good chance of getting him into a post-primary runoff (if no candidate gets 40 percent in the September primary, the top two face off two Tuesdays later; almost every insider in town believes that this will happen). When I suggest to him that there's no crisis, he takes umbrage: "Tell that to somebody concerned about racial profiling, or the parent of public-school children." He's speaking most directly to the New Yorkers to whom the Giuliani era has been something less than a wonder, but making little effort, so far, to find an audience among the satisfied.

If Green sounds a tad defensive, that's because he is. On background, his aides gripe about the tabloids' tendency to attach to his name certain appositive phrases, as in: "Mark Green, perceived as soft on crime . . . " On the record to me last week, Green called that label "a slander," not once but three or four times. His recent

Illustration by Drew Friedman

high-profile moves—a speech promising higher pay and college subsidies for cops, and especially the endorsement of Bill Bratton, whom he's spent years cultivating—are designed to put early and heavy ice on this sprain before it swells. The rhetorical posture is third-way Clintonian—*I'm not Rudy, but I'm not Dinkins either.* Where Ferrer is playing to Dinkins's old coalition, Green seeks to reassure white moderates.

Hevesi, paradoxically, is trying to take a bite out of Ferrer's pie. The polls suggest the reason: Having been seen throughout much of the Giuliani era by many liberals as an ally of the mayor, Hevesi is having trouble with black voters, and he can't win a primary if that doesn't change. Like Ferrer, he emphasizes diversity (Green and Vallone did not, especially), and he spoke to me in more specific detail than the others about the school system. It's the curse of comptrollers running for mayor to demonstrate that they know more than numbers, and it's the burden of this particular comptroller to prove that he's a bit more liberal than people suspect.

I like the way Vallone is thinking: Trying to turn 25-odd years of service on the City Council into a plus is a courageous exercise. Can it possibly work? Well, he can point to dozens of pieces of legislation that he's passed, and he sure knows his way around City Hall. While the others are positioning themselves to solidify their base (Ferrer), or to reach out to foreign constituencies (Green, white moderates; Hevesi, blacks), Vallone's pitch is the only one that's not ideological at all: *I've governed. I know the budget. I can do this.* It's an admirably universalist appeal, but in a political milieu so intensely driven by particularist interests as New York's, it may leave him neither here nor there.

IF THE FOUR OF THEM ARE HAVING TROUBLE capturing the mood of the city, it might be because there isn't a mood. Or if there is one, it's vague anxiety about the economy and race relations (in minority neighborhoods, of course, anxiety about police brutality is a good deal stronger than vague). The city doesn't need a healer, or a tough guy, or a cheerleader (Ed Koch in 1977). It needs a sort of level-headed manager.

Or a new crisis. The mayor, fighting Bill's office space and starting Sensation II, is clearly feeling his oats now after a period of calm. Rudy, you have seven months until Primary Day. ■

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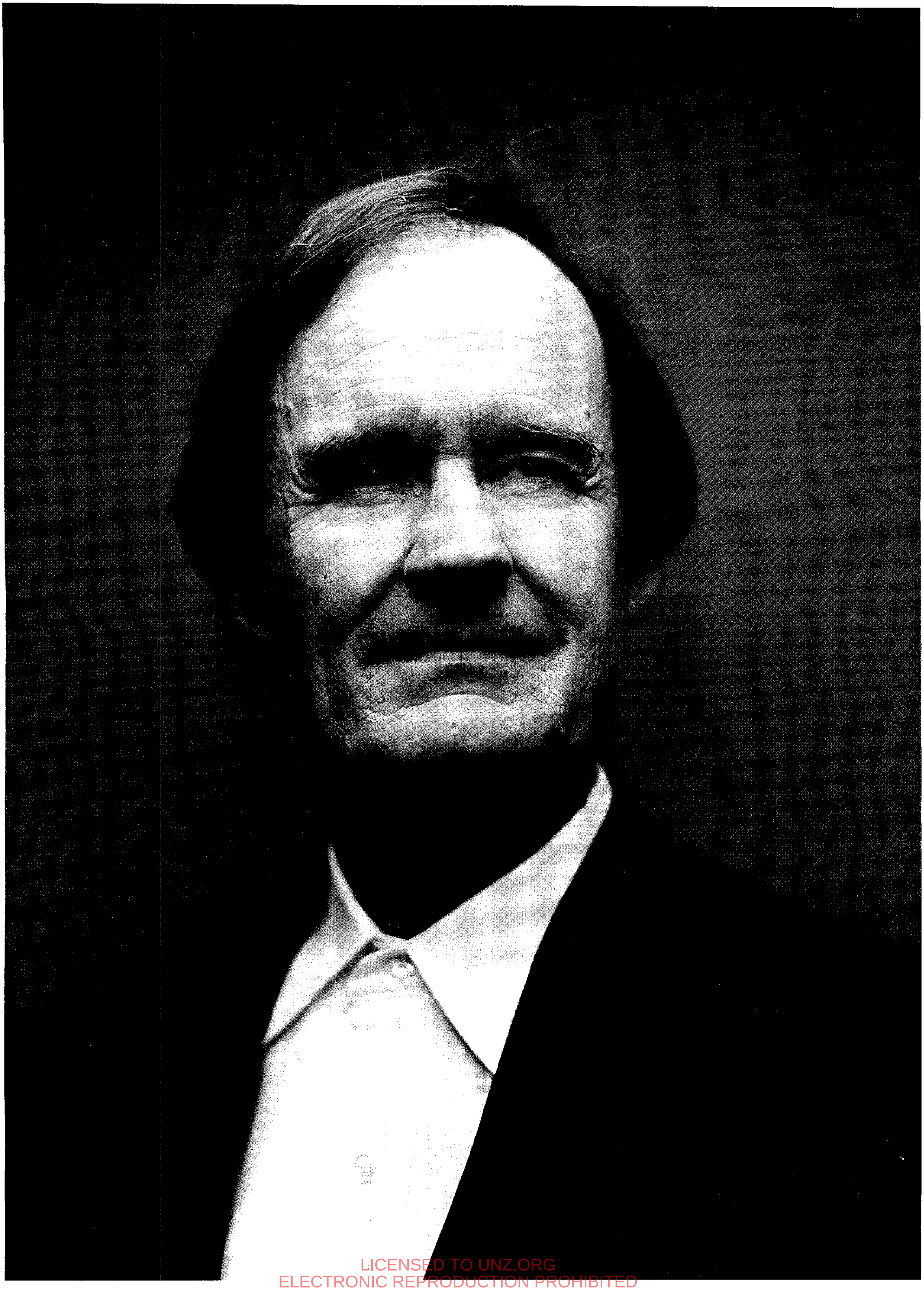
Boies Will Be BOIES

Beneath the superlawyer's unflappable, midwestern affect is a monomaniacal competitor, a man who hates to lose. So what does David Boies think about the Supreme Court decision that handed him his most bitter defeat? That it was worse, in some ways, than Dred Scott. By Chris Smith

ALL IS GLOSSY AND BRIGHT INSIDE THE FOURTEENTH-FLOOR FEDERAL COURTROOM. The marble floors, the walnut paneling, everything seems buffed shiny as a new pair of Prada loafers. • The crowd, standing room only, thrums with eager anticipation. Three sketch artists bump brushes trying to capture the scene. In the front row of spectators is Fran Lebowitz, former author and current insider wit-about-town. Next to her sits Marci Klein, the long blonde powerhouse producer from *Saturday Night Live.* Today she's appearing in the role of supportive daughter—to Calvin Klein, who sits a few feet ahead at the plaintiff's table. • As always, Calvin is inside the velvet ropes. Occasionally he peeks over his shoulder at his business partner and adversary, Linda Wachner, the titan in huge red-framed glasses who runs Warnaco, the behemoth apparel company that manufactures and distributes Klein's designs. Last year, Klein found out that Warnaco was stacking his precious name next to SUV-size packs of Huggies in giant warehouse stores. Alleging that his valuable brand was being irreparably sullied in such company and that Warnaco was altering jean designs without his permission, Klein sued for his freedom. This promises to be a gossipy battle, with millions of dollars and prodigious egos at stake. • Then Calvin Klein leans across the railing to get close to Marci and Fran, and lets all the tension out of the room with a single whisper. "The deal's done," Klein says. • "We're settling." Then he approaches Wachner, bends to kiss her, and says, "When all is said and done—" "—we're still partners!" Wachner says, completing his sentence and returning the kiss. • Now it's on to the tough issues. "Let's go to Balthazar to celebrate!" Lebowitz says. • "No, let's go to Odeon!" Marci says. "It's closer and the food's better!" • But the discussion halts and all heads turn when the true man-of-the-moment ambles within range. It's David Boies,

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ROBERT MAXWELL



the superlawyer who humbled Bill Gates and changed Microsoft forever, who collected $512 million in damages for customers ripped off by Christie's and Sotheby's, and who became a cultural hero in the war to recount Florida's presidential ballots. The presence of Boies as Klein's trial lawyer is a major reason why all of a sudden there is no trial.

"I'm, uh, not going to breakfast," Boies says. His thinning brown hair sticks out at unpredictable lengths and angles. A plastic watch is strapped on top of Boies's coat sleeve. He's wearing his courtroom uniform: dark-blue suit and white button-down shirt with blue stripes, both from Lands' End; navy knit tie with squared-off bottom; nondescript black sneakers. One of Klein's cuffs costs more than all of what Boies is wearing.

Yet Boies is the cool guy here. Calvin Klein proudly introduces Boies to his daughter. Lebowitz can't get to Boies fast enough. Downstairs, exiting the courthouse, Klein draws a couple of reporters, but the cameras flock to Boies. He's not carrying a litigator's bag or a legal pad, or wearing a cell phone or a beeper or an overcoat. Boies wants it to look like the only weapon he needs against the elements and his opponents is his brain.

He stands in the slush on Worth Street calmly waiting for CNN to go live. It's cold, and when there's a short delay, Boies takes the Lands' End sweater that's slung over his shoulders fifties-coed-style and pulls it over his head, crookedly, so one end of his shirt collar juts out.

Meet the press: David Boies outside the Leon County Courthouse in Tallahassee.

Photograph by Chang W. Lee/New York Times Pictures.

"ALTHOUGH HE APPEARS TO enjoy and relate to differen

The interview finished, Boies waits as Jonathan Schiller, one of his partners, tries to locate their limo. A CNN cameraman bounces over. "I love you, man!" he shouts, grabbing Boies's right hand and arm and pumping it as Boies laughs. "I'm a Republican, but you're great! You're the best!"

Someone suggests hopping on the IRT. It's just two stops to Balthazar (Lebowitz won that case). "Yeah," says Boies, who's got nothing against the subway. "But how many stops to Armonk? I'm going back to work."

DAVID BOIES HATES LOSING AT ANYTHING, be it a rec-room Ping-Pong match with Garry Shandling or late-night poker with takeover artist Carl Icahn and financier Leon Black. Walking out of court after the Calvin Klein truce, Boies smiles and says all the right things to the press about the deal's serving his client's best interests. Then, in a quiet aside, Boies says, "But I'm a trial guy." He wants to win.

As of last week, however, when a federal appeals court decisively rejected Boies's argument that Napster is an innocent bit of software enjoyed by pure-hearted music lovers, Boies is on an extremely rare losing streak—precisely at the moment he's more famous and revered than ever.

Boies retains the abiding affection of even his losing clients. "David Boies is the real thing," Al Gore says. "He masters the most complex subjects at lightning speed and then communicates the essential points in completely clear and totally accessible language. He's a mighty good friend to have on top of all that."

Boies's best friend, lawyer James Fox Miller, maintains that Boies is untroubled by second thoughts about Florida. "He doesn't dwell on anything," Jimmy Miller says. "And in a losing situation, the guy showed the world that he's the standard. His *client* lost. David didn't lose. He won. Big-time."

A month away from his 60th birthday, Boies enjoys fame, personal wealth, and invaluable professional independence. Yet spend time talking with Boies about the Florida mess and it's clear that he's nagged by an uneasy feeling: His inflated celebrity came from a case he lost. And Boies can barely restrain his anger at the United States Supreme Court.

Couched in Boies's detached, lawyerly *on the one hand, on the other hands* is a slashing denunciation of the justice's 5-4 vote as among the biggest embarrassments in American judicial history. "You had *Dred Scott,"* Boies says, mulling other examples of bad judgment. "Forty-some years later you had *Plessy* v. *Ferguson.* Forty or fifty years later you have the Japanese internment case. I don't know whether this case is like that. It's like that in some ways. It's unlike those cases in a lot of ways. In fact, you can make an argument that this decision is a *worse* decision than those in the sense that those decisions, you could argue, were almost compelled by the social and political realities of their time. And that the Supreme Court, to have given a different decision, would have endangered rather than preserved its position in our society. Whereas this instance, it certainly could have avoided this case. Avoided doing what it did. So I think there is a sense in which this case was a matter of choice, not a matter of being swept along with social and political currents at the time."

It's hard to dispute Boies's analysis. But is it possible he underestimated the hard-ball politics at work on the Supreme Court? “I don’t know,” he says, the only time his delivery seems off-balance. “I don’t know what . . . I . . . misjudged.”

BOIES ENTERS THE LIBRARY AT A gallop, proffering a Costco-size plastic jug. “Want a pretzel?” he says, then doubles back toward the kitchen and opens the refrigerator. “How about a soda?”

As brick Georgian hillside manses go, the Boies homestead in Armonk is cozy, decorated primarily with snapshots from family trips to Cancun and the Greek isles. Every inch of library shelf space is crammed—with bulky bound volumes containing the court papers from Boies’s greatest hits, but also dozens of war histories, with a concentration of Churchill-related books, and paperbacks ranging from Henry Miller to James Patterson. There’s a small, battered gold trophy, inscribed to Boies from Gen. Omar Bradley. In 1955, Bradley came to Los Angeles to honor paperboys who’d sold bonds during the Korean War. A contest was held to pick one paperboy who’d accept on behalf of all the others. Boies, a 14-year-old working for the Los Angeles *Examiner,* won—not because he sold the most bonds but because he delivered the best spiel selling the bonds.

Boies grew up primarily in Los Angeles, the oldest of five children of a high-school American-history teacher dad and an elementary-school-teacher mom. But he was born in Illinois farm country and routinely draws complimentary comparisons to Honest Abe. “I don’t want to seem like I’m inhaling here,” says Senator Joseph Lieberman, “but David has a Lincolnesque quality, even physically. When I first met him, I was surprised he was about my height. On TV, you had the impression he was taller.”

eople, my view is that he’s very insular and tribal,” says a friend.

Boies cracks open a diet Stewart’s root beer and settles into a high-backed gray chair. On a table in front of us is a fax relating to Boies’s next trip into the spotlight, the California power crisis. It’s a sunny weekday afternoon and Boies is wearing a blue-and-red plaid flannel shirt above saggy blue sweatpants and well-worn New Balance sneakers. When he’s not on trial or on the road, he usually works from an office upstairs, instead of his firm’s offices in Armonk or midtown.

Not that Boies allowed himself to be bound by the traditional rules even during his nearly 30 years at old-school Cravath, Swaine & Moore. A partner at 31, Boies established his brilliance beating back an antitrust suit against IBM in 1981; his bravura performance knocking down Gen. William Westmoreland’s libel case against CBS in 1985 made Boies a public figure; and a 1986 *New York Times Magazine* cover story certified his stardom. Boies abruptly quit Cravath in 1997, ostensibly out of loyalty to George Steinbrenner, whom he’d taken on as a client in a lawsuit against Major League Baseball. Cravath had ties to other big-league teams, though, and was not happy.

Much of the shape of Boies, Schiller & Flexner has been sculpted on the fly. “It has not been a rationally planned enterprise,” Boies says. “When I left Cravath, I thought I would practice with six, eight, ten, twelve lawyers. Stay small and lean and flexible. But it’s grown like Topsy.” The firm is now up to 100 lawyers. “We want to do litigation where we can push the law,” he says. “We want to do litigation where we think we’re on the right side. We want to do litigation that’s challenging. And other than that, we don’t have any real goals.”

Boies says he’s not value-neutral in choosing cases, but defining his standards for “the right side,” even with hypothetical examples, isn’t easy.

The Nazis marching in Skokie? “Probably not,” Boies says. “Everybody’s got a right to have a lawyer. Not everybody’s got a right to have me.”

Gun manufacturers? “I think it’s unlikely we would find it interesting to take on the defense of an individual gun manufacturer, unless it raised some larger issue,” he says. “On the other hand, I can certainly see issues where you’ve had government regulation or potentially punitive measures being applied to an entire industry. We might think that was the kind of case we’d want to be in.”

General Electric, trying to avoid paying to scoop its PCBs out of the Hudson River? “I’d have to take a look at that,” Boies says. “I think there is a real danger of looking backwards and penalizing companies for activity that at the time it was undertaken was viewed either neutrally or in some cases very positively.”

Boies typically bills at $750 an hour. So the Department of Justice (Boies worked for about $40 an hour against Microsoft) and Gore (free) got immense bargains. Of course, the marketing benefit to Boies and his firm is incalculable. The election case, however, also appealed to Boies’s well-closeted liberal instincts. The one time his passion is clearly on the surface is when Boies mentions traveling to Mississippi during the summers of 1966 and 1967, after graduating from Yale Law School. “I was representing civil-rights workers in court, advising them on demonstrations, participating in demonstrations,” Boies says. “I lost an awful lot of cases I should have won.”

Before November, Boies’s only other partisan period was a brief, late-seventies stint on Ted Kennedy’s staff—replacing future Supreme Court justice Stephen Breyer. But Boies is not apolitical. He’s donated money to every race run by his friend Mark Green, whom Boies met in Washington in 1977, and he’ll be a star attraction at fund-raisers for Green’s current mayoral race. “I’m basically a Democrat,” Boies says, “but I’m not that active a Democrat. And there are Republicans that I support.”

He tries to maintain the nothing-personal, strictly-business tone he stuck to when friends urged him to treat the Microsoft case as a crusade. Then, Boies likened himself to a dispassionate doctor. “That’s not a bad analogy for the election case, too,” Boies says. “This may have been a patient I cared about a little more.” How deeply Boies mourns Gore’s loss becomes apparent only slowly.

FOR MOST OF HIS THREE DECADES IN NEW York, Boies has eaten at the same handful of restaurants, none of them economy-class. “It’s either La Caravelle, Chin Chin, Patsy’s for Italian food, Sparks, or the Post House for steaks,” he says. “The only restaurant I’ve lost is Christ Cella.”

Today Boies met with his client Ernst & Young; joined a conference call on Napster’s circuit-court appeal; mulled antitrust strategy with Philip Morris officials; took depositions from MSG executives tangled in litigation with the Yankees, Boies’s client, over TV contracts; and prepped for tomorrow’s auction-house-case hearing.

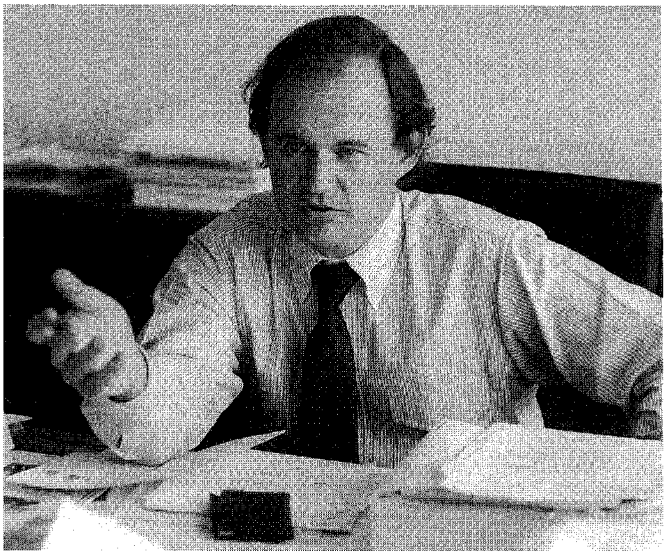
So he’s earned a good drink. Boies takes a back-corner table at Sparks and peruses the wine list slowly. This is due partly to connoisseurship and partly to his dyslexia. “I have a moderately severe case,” he says. “I didn’t read until I was in third grade. I still mispronounce a lot of words. I don’t spell. I can’t learn foreign languages. One of the reasons that I don’t use notes is that I can’t look down and read and get it without spending a little time. I have six children, two of whom have dyslexia equivalent to mine.”

Fawning profiles always mention Boies’s ability to instantly cite page numbers in legal reference books when answering a judge's query. The brutally hardworking Boies is irritated by portrayals of him as a Rain Man of jurisprudence. "It's not because I've memorized every case and every page in history," Boies says. "It's because I've concentrated on what I think are the important cases, and the important parts of those cases. If you're good at what you do and have done your homework, you should have a focused idea of what's really going to come up."

He orders a 1995 Château Gruaud-Larose for $80 (he has an extensive collection of French wine in his home cellar, and is descended from French Huguenots who decided to Anglicize the surname DuBois sometime before arriving in America in the 1600s—"though how adding an *e* Anglicized it I don't understand," he says). For dinner, he orders the same thing every time. "The filet mignon, medium," Boies tells the waiter, his voice rising politely but firmly, "just plain and dry. *Nothing* else on the plate. No parsley, no juice, no butter, nothing." He does, however, sprinkle salt on his rolls.

Out of the corner of my eye, I see a white-haired, thickset man at the next table rise and face us. He brings his hands up to his face and a camera flashes. No "Excuse me, Mr. Boies, do you mind if I . . ." Just a quick snapshot and the man returns to his dinner. Boies is public property now.

BOIES DIRECTED HIS SUPREME COURT argument a


Legal ease: Opposite, at a Justice Department press conference on the Microsoft antitrust case; above, in his office at Cravath around the time of the Westmoreland libel trial.

Boies learned early that granting access was the surest way to bank media goodwill—that and flattering the media's sense of its own importance. "Other than the lawyers on the other side, the people in the press that really cover a case know more about it, think more about it, worry more about it, care more about it than anyone else," Boies says. "They are the people that will have the best information. They are the people that are likely to have the insights you didn't see, the idea you didn't think of, the fact you didn't know. That's why you go out and drink with them."

Jimmy Miller, the Florida divorce lawyer who has been Boies's best friend since they met in law school in 1962, sees more than a little calculation at work. He and Boies just made a trip to Las Vegas with a *60 Minutes* crew tagging along. "I asked David, 'Why do you want to get filmed shooting crap?' and he says, 'I don't want to ever say no to the press,' " Miller says. "Have you ever seen anybody have better press than David? When you get as successful and famous as he is, there's always someone out to cut your nuts off. No one is out to cut his nuts off."

Boies is indeed good company, charming and easygoing. That is not to say he reveals much. And Boies doesn't do introspection. By dessert, my neck is stiff with tension, as if I've been pushing heavy furniture around.

"Although he always appears to enjoy and relate to different people, my view is that he is very insular and tribal," Miller says. "He doesn't have nearly the number of friends you would think, people he really cares about."

I mention the ecstatic Republican cameraman and ask Boies what he makes of his new rock-star status. "I think what happened in Florida touched people in a way that public events often don't," Boies says. "I think what it was about was the people's right to vote and have those votes counted. And if you think back through our history, an awful lot of what we've fought over, struggled for, is the right of people to vote. That's what the civil-rights movement was, at its bottom, about. At the fundamental level, democracy means a government in which the people vote. Lincoln's words 'Government of the people, by the people, and for the people' I think resonate at an emotional, as well as an intellectual, level. I've had a lot of Republicans, just like that guy out in the street, stop me and say, 'I'm still glad Bush won, but you were right, the votes should have been counted.' I think that that experience has touched a chord in people that isn't very close to the surface."

True, I say, but cable viewers weren't responding to a still picture of the Constitution. They were reacting to him. Boies stares at the floor. "Well," he says, "part of my presentation, or style"—a self-deprecating laugh—"is a style that tries not to get in the way of the argument. When you're in front of a jury, what you want that jury to do is focus on the argument, not on you. You try to not get in the way of the message. And I think that particularly with this particular message, where I think the message really struck people, I think a style of presentation that simply let the message speak for itself, and didn't try to build it, didn't try to accompany it with partisan attacks, but just sort of stuck to the fundamental point that was at issue, I think helped people relate both to the issue and, in an ironic way, to the messenger. Because they began to associate me with the message."

Boies has long said that if he weren't a lawyer he'd be a history teacher like his father. His choice of the law, he says, was purely pragmatic—the shortest route to a graduate degree, making up for the two years he'd taken off between high school and college. A marriage to his teenage girlfriend, followed by the birth of two children by the time he was 21, motivated him to speed through the University of Redlands while also teaching journalism at a mental hospital. In 1963, after his first year at Northwestern's law school, Boies was divorced. He soon fell in love with a fellow law student, Judith Daynard; inconveniently, she happened to be married to a Northwestern law professor. The school eagerly helped Boies transfer to Yale. He married Daynard three years later and had twin sons; they divorced in the early seventies. Boies and his first two wives remain on good terms; all parties blame Boies's work obsession for the divorces. He met Mary McInnis in Washington when she was working as assistant director of domestic policy in the Carter White House;

Photographs: left, Marilynn K. Yee/New York Times Pictures; right, Reuters Newmedia/Corbis.

they were married in 1982, after she’d become a vice-president at CBS in New York. He and Mary also have two children.

Mary Boies, now in private practice, seems to have a lower tolerance than her husband for his status as a media darling. When the latest batch of photographers arrive to shoot David at home, Mary demands they return to the entryway and wipe up every drop of snow they’ve tracked in from the driveway.

nuch at "history and the American people" as at the justices.

IN NOVEMBER, WITHIN TWELVE HOURS of arriving in Florida, Boies had supplanted campaign chairman William Daley and Warren Christopher as Gore’s public face. “For him to be our spokesman,” Lieberman says, explaining the spin, “it put the case into the system of justice, not in the political system anymore.” Bush lawyers were less charitable in assessing the effect: They dubbed the media adoration “the COB,” the Cult of Boies.

Michael Carvin, one of Bush’s main lawyers, claims Boies’s overexposure helped the Republican strategy for the final showdown. “I was surprised and gratified that he was on the Sunday-morning talk shows before his Supreme Court argument,” Carvin says. “We watched them and got a sense of what he was going to say in court the next day. I also think, as hardworking as he is, it certainly hurt his prep time. Maybe he might have anticipated a couple of the questions at argument if he’d had a little bit more time to prepare.”

Boies scoffs at the suggestion he tipped his hand. “They didn’t have to watch me on the Sunday shows! All they had to do was read my argument on November 20”—in the first Florida Supreme Court hearing—“or any of my press statements!” he says. “If anybody needed to watch the Sunday shows to figure out what we were arguing, it was somebody who had not been in Florida.”

On the afternoon of Saturday, December 9, Boies was in a Tallahassee sports bar and grill. The day before, he’d won a key victory in the Florida Supreme Court; the recounts were revived. Boies was eating a burger and fries and drinking a vodka and grapefruit juice when MSNBC flashed the news that the U.S. Supreme Court had ordered an immediate halt to the counting, at least until the top court could hear arguments already scheduled for Monday. Boies was stunned. “It took CNN about 60 seconds more to put it on,” he says. “And during that 60 seconds, I found it hard to believe that MSNBC was right.”

Still, Boies was so confident his work was finished that he flew home to Armonk; Harvard professor Laurence Tribe was in a Watergate hotel room in Washington preparing to argue for Gore on Monday. Boies agreed with the choice. “Larry has an intimate knowledge of constitutional law and of equal-protection cases that will always be substantially greater than mine,” Boies says. He had some personal knowledge of Tribe’s talents in front of the Supreme Court: In 1987, Boies, representing Texaco, faced Tribe, representing Pennzoil. The Supreme Court voted 9–0 in favor of Pennzoil.

“David is a brilliant lawyer,” Tribe says. “But I don’t know that being in an appellate context and answering questions that are fired at him by judges, and anticipating what’s really going on in the questioner’s head, if it’s a smart judge, is David’s forte. Especially in the Supreme Court, the questions tend to represent the tip of some kind of iceberg. If you simply answer straightforwardly the thing that’s been asked without keeping in mind what it is they’re really trying to deal with, you will very often say something that may sound okay to an outside observer, but doesn’t advance your cause very much.”

Both men were shocked when, late Saturday, Gore picked Boies over Tribe. The conventional analysis has been that Boies was more fluent in the details of the Florida cases that the Gore team thought the Supreme Court would dissect. “Even with the stay, we all thought we had a chance in the Supreme Court hearing,” says Ron Klain, Gore’s chief legal strategist. “We knew the chance was below 50 percent but well above zero.”

Boies was more pessimistic. “A litigator always spots himself a 5 percent minimum chance,” he says, “but it wasn’t much more than that.” So, Boies says, public relations was high on his agenda. “There was a sense that five justices of the Supreme Court had already made up their minds that they were not going to permit the votes to be counted in Florida,” Boies says, his cadence slowing to a crawl. “If that was the case, the function of the Supreme Court argument was to reveal to the American people and to history whether that decision had a basis or not. There was a view that, in part because of my familiarity with the Florida record and the Florida cases, that I was the right person to do that.”

When Tribe is told of Boies’s thinking, he’s silent for a long time. “Wow,” he finally manages. “Sometimes you put some of your emphasis on providing ammunition for what will end up being the dissenters, who might get vindicated by history. But if there’s any trade-off at all between clarifying the historical record and trying to find that slight chink in the wall for O’Connor or Kennedy, I would always go for the latter. History will write itself.”

Tribe admits he’s not an objective critic, but he says the same weaknesses that hurt Boies thirteen years earlier surfaced again in December. “There was the suggestion by Breyer of sending the case back so that the Florida court could reformulate what was going on, and proceed to count until the 18th,” Tribe says, pointing out one tiny opening. “If that had been pursued, either by other justices or by David, in terms of, ‘Yes, the 18th is really the deadline after all, not the 12th’—then I might have had a feeling of greater hope at the end than I did.”

Boies dismisses all the hindsight. The second-guessing about delaying Katherine Harris’s certification of Bush as the winner, thereby sacrificing time that could have been spent on the “contest phase”; about the Gore camp’s decision to hurry through its argument before Florida judge N. Sanders Sauls because it assumed Sauls was a lost cause; about Boies’s supposed blindness to the ultimately decisive equal-protection issue—none of it, in Boies’s view, is relevant.

“The protest-contest thing didn’t have any effect at all,” he says. “If the protest had been a little bit longer—*two hours* longer—Palm Beach would have gotten its reports in, okay? This was not a case where anybody ran out of time. We were within six hours of having Miami-Dade counted. We were within 18 or 24 hours of having the entire state recounted. We didn’t run out of time. The real cleavage in the United States Supreme Court was between the justices that said, ‘Hey! Send it back, let ’em try!’ and the five who said, ‘*Ooooh,* no!’ The reason the five-member majority stopped the vote counting on Saturday, before they’d even had the argument, was because they knew as well as we did that between Saturday and Monday, which was the argument, the votes would be counted! It would be done! It would be over!”

And what would be wrong with that? Boies takes a big swallow of wine, then allows a grin to spread slowly across his face. “Well, I don’t know,” he says, laughing. “You gotta ask them. Everybody after the fact wants to find something they can go back and look at. But none of the decisions that were made along the way could have affected any one of those five votes on the United States Supreme Court.”

The man at the next table snaps another photo. Boies doesn’t seem to notice the flash, or that his chocolate ice cream is melting and dripping over the sides of its bowl. “Who knows?” he asks, leaning close again. “Maybe there’s an argument that would have persuaded them. Or one of them. Which was all you needed. But I couldn’t think of it then.”

THE NEXT MORNING, THE NINTH-floor hallway of the Moynihan U.S. Courthouse on Pearl Street is jammed with dark-suited lawyers who’ve arrived a half-hour early for a hearing in the auction-house price-fixing case. “Boies is in the building,” stage-whispers an excited junior partner. “I didn’t see him, but I was passing through the lobby and I heard . . . that *voice.*”

Today’s hearing is straightforward. Christie’s and Sotheby’s, having pleaded guilty to colluding to fix commission prices, have been negotiating their punishment with the Department of Justice and with Boies, the lead counsel representing the 130,000 customers who’ve joined a class-action suit. A settlement of $512 million has been hammered out, and now the parties are asking Judge Lewis Kaplan to approve its terms.

Boies points to a series of large exhibits on an easel, plain black type on white poster board, as he outlines the deal. “Perhaps it’s not surprising,” Boies says with a small smile, “that plaintiffs thought the figure should be somewhat higher, and defendants somewhat lower. We believe this agreement is a very attractive package for the class as well as fair to the auction houses.”

He’s brief and lucid, to the point of underwhelming. By the time he’s finished speaking, there’s a collective shrug, as if to say, *Of course, who wouldn’t understand that?*

The moment the next lawyer begins speaking is when Boies’s gift becomes manifest. A Sotheby’s lawyer tries to make a minor point, but within three sentences he’s lost his way. The judge is interrupting. The lawyer for Christie’s, who’s on the same side as the guy from Sotheby’s, is rising, red-faced, to agree with Boies.

But the lawyers really sit up straight when the discussion turns to the formula for splitting up the legal fees. Fifty-three firms will receive varying percentages of the pot. At the outset of the case, twenty law firms submitted bids to become lead counsel, each naming a target number. If the final settlement squeezed less than that amount out of Christie’s and Sotheby’s, the lead counsel would be paid nothing and be responsible for court costs. The lead counsel would reap 25 percent of any damages above the projected floor. The average bid envisioned a settlement of $130 million. Boies, the winner, set a target of $405 million.

No wonder the discussion is veering into a testimonial to Boies. “I never in my fondest dreams believed the defendants would be forced to pay $512 million,” says Fred Furth, who was interim lead counsel until Boies won the bidding. “It is a most outstanding result. All I ask is that we receive an appropriate fee as well, Your Honor. Because we feel like we teed up the ball for the new Tiger Woods of the bar.” Boies belly-laughs at the compliment. He’s poised to collect nearly $27 million from the case.

The auction-house hearing is a reminder of just how deeply embedded business values have become in the mainstream: The cool Boies, a corporate litigator, is the current legal hero, instead of a traditionally hot, at least nominally populist defense lawyer like F. Lee Bailey or Johnnie Cochran.

Boies doesn’t have time to linger. The Napster decision looms; when it goes against Boies, he delves into another appeal. He’d wanted to break new ground in Internet copyright law, but is likely going to have to settle for breathing temporary life into Napster so it could cut deals with major record companies. Boies also has upcoming depositions on behalf of Sheldon Solow, the real-estate developer.

But first he’s off to California and a meeting at Apple—the company signed up as a client after Boies vanquished Microsoft. Then his first trip to the Sunshine State since George W. Bush became president. Boies represents Florida Power & Light, one of the out-of-state suppliers of electricity to browned-out California. “We’re negotiating long-term contracts so there are no more shortages,” Boies says. And if FP&L should need to sue California, it will be well armed.

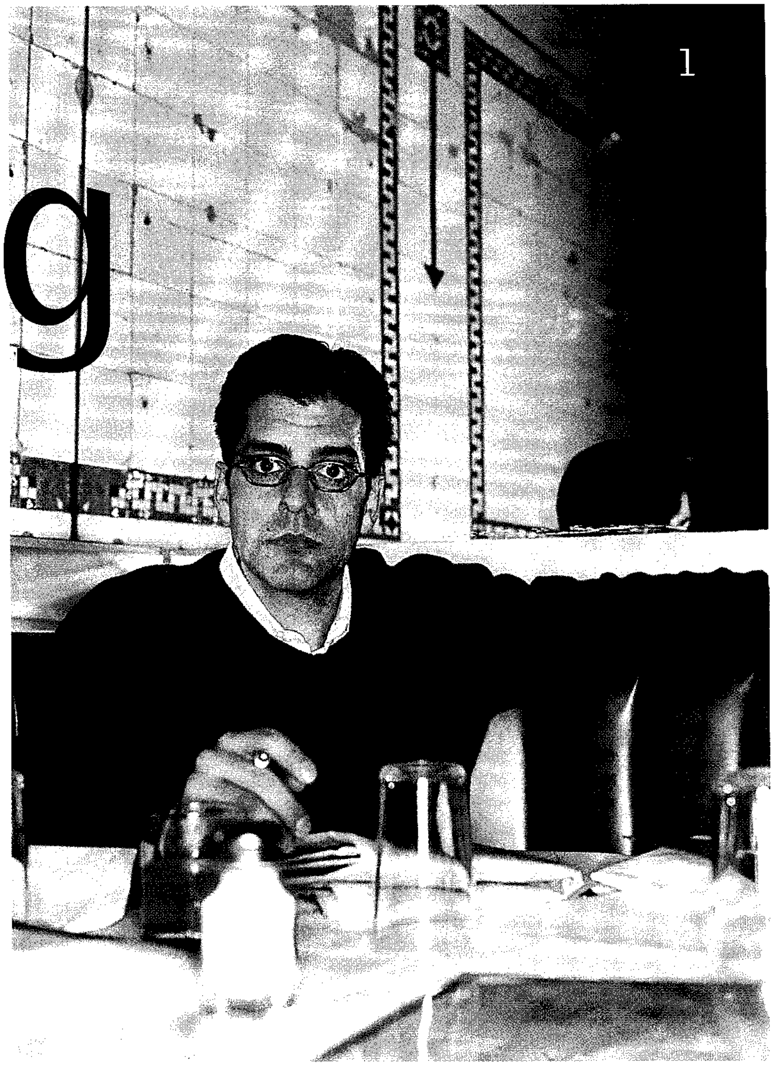
“You take on cases as they come along,” Boies says, his voice brimming with joyful-warrior spirit. “Sometimes they come along after you’ve won, sometimes they come along after you’ve lost, and sometimes they come along after you’ve been rained out. But I don’t like to lose. Ever.” ■

“WHO KNOWS? MAYBE THERE’S an argument that would have persuaded them. But I couldn’t think of it then.”

Raising the BAR

Overshadowed by investment bankers, venture capitalists, and even dot-com entrepreneurs, lawyers at the end of the nineties were feeling like wage slaves—and not particularly well-paid ones. But that was a century ago. With the NASDAQ down, law-school applications are up. And attorneys are all over the news with cases that matter, from antitrust battles to class-action suits—even a certain election. With the legal profession again near the top of the food chain, we check in with ten of the city's legal stars in the making.

By Cameron Stracher



1 THE LITIGATOR

MICHAEL LACOVARA, 37, partner, Sullivan & Cromwell

Being a litigator means never having to say you're sorry. At the top firms, it also means rarely getting into court. Most cases settle, and most big-firm lawyers pass their time on motions, papers, and pretrial proceedings. Yet Michael Lacovara, a litigator and partner at Sullivan & Cromwell, managed to get his day in court and to shine in what has widely been considered a debacle for his firm: the defense of Microsoft in the government's antitrust lawsuit. Kicked in the butt by David Boies at every turn, losing badly in the court of public opinion, and crucified by Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson's findings of fact and conclusions of law, Lacovara emerged from the fray with his reputation burnished instead of fried. "One of the reasons Lacovara was given more and more play throughout the Microsoft trial was that Judge Jackson pretty much loathed the entire S&C team," explains Dahlia Lithwick, the *Slate* writer who covered the trial, "with the exception of Lacovara."

"Lacovara's cross-examinations were the most skillful S&C did," says Ken Auletta, who also covered the trial. "Like David Boies, his questions were never scripted, and he always tried to put things in a larger context. He's a storyteller and used wit to make his points."

"I think Lacovara is a very good lawyer," his adversary David Boies says. "I thought his style of litigating was similar to mine."

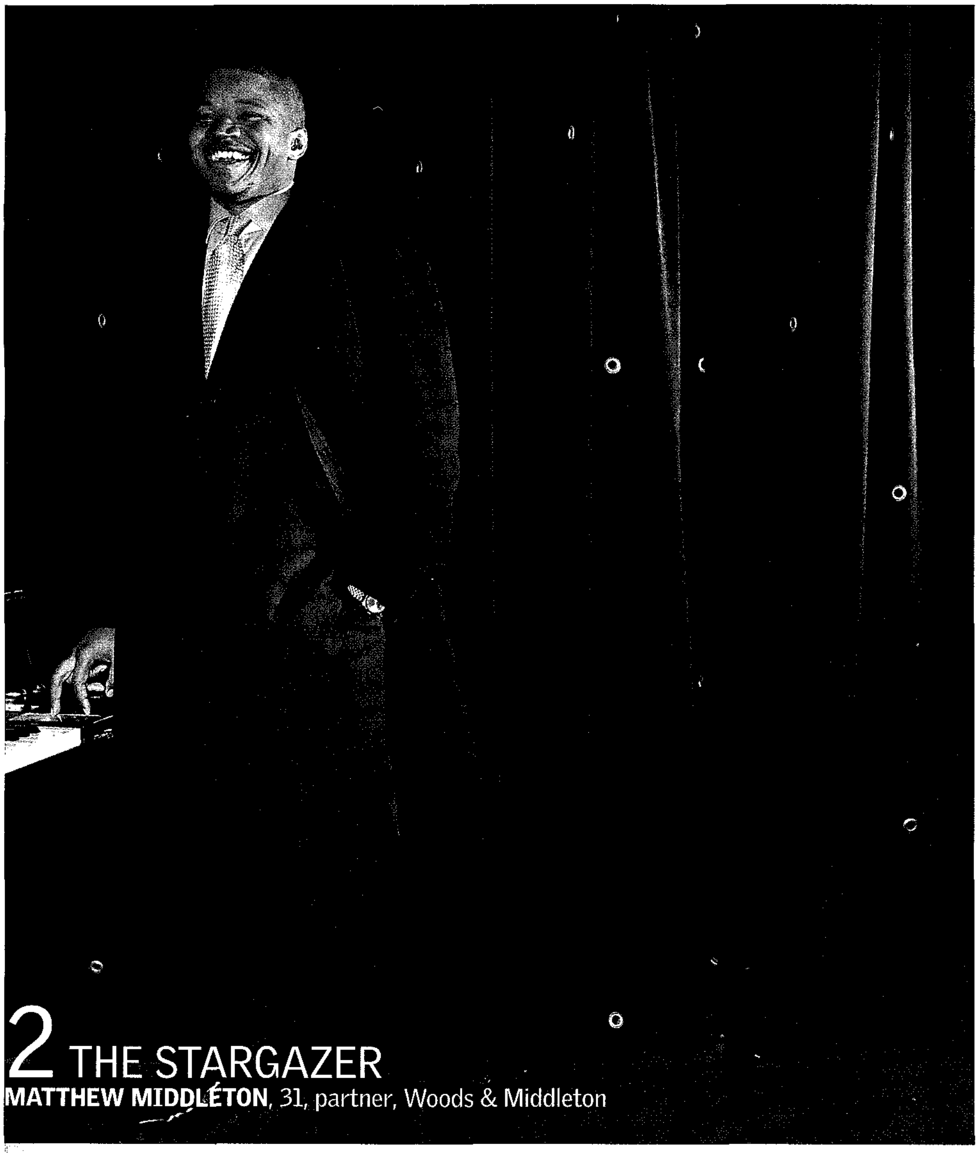
Lacovara—whose father is a partner in the New York office of

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIN PATRICE O'BRIEN

Mayer, Brown & Platt—cut his technology teeth on Microsoft. As a result, when S&C decided to open an office in Palo Alto—an earthshaking move for a stodgy, traditional white-shoe firm, and one that reflects the shift in the balance of power to the West Coast and Silicon Valley—he was tagged to head its litigation group. He just moved his family—wife Carla, whom he met while at Harvard Law School, and two children (his son, now 2½, was born during the trial)—to San Francisco. He will continue to "reverse commute," however, to handle the work of his New York clients.

Unlike many of his colleagues, Lacovara is not shy with the press. Indeed, he was one of the few S&C lawyers who weren't afraid to talk with reporters. "He was very good at it," reports Auletta. "He wasn't defensive. Microsoft's legal strategy—conceived by Gates and supported by S&C—was to deny everything. Lacovara was much more candid when he spoke, and as a result, he had more credibility."

Now Lacovara will continue to represent Microsoft in the 100-plus civil antitrust lawsuits that have been filed against the company, as well as other high-tech and biotech clients in various litigation matters including regulatory investigations, antitrust, and securities claims. "When I told my wife I was asked to join the Microsoft team in 1998, I don't think either of us quite understood what it would mean," says Lacovara. Now, if his conduct during the trial is a harbinger, David Boies may soon have to watch his back.



2 THE STARGAZER

MATTHEW MIDDLETON, 31, partner, Woods & Middleton

Being a lawyer means listening to hot music, hobnobbing with hip-hop stars, and getting invited to a lot of cool parties. At least it does if you're Matthew Middleton. Middleton, who represents rappers DMX and Shyne (currently on trial with Sean "Puffy" Combs), always wanted to hang with the hip-hop crowd. Many of his friends growing up in both Harlem and the Bronx, and later at Howard University, went into the music business, including Puffy. After a three-year stint in the Manhattan district attorney's office, where he prosecuted drug crimes, assaults, and homicides, Middleton decided to start his own firm catering to entertainers with his best friend from the D.A.'s office, Ian Niles.

"It was terrifying at first," Middleton confesses. He had only two clients, neither of whom had a record deal, and his background in criminal law would not seem the ideal training for an entertainment lawyer. But the major labels were about to make Shyne, one of his two original clients, big enough to build a practice on.

"They were wining and dining us," he says of the bidding war among the labels for Shyne, "and I didn't know it wasn't like that every day." In a business in which "personal relationships are everything," Middleton has been able to parlay his connections into a client list that includes some of hip-hop's and R&B's biggest stars. DMX came from a longtime friendship with the rapper's producers, with whom he had grown up in the Bronx. "I heard the buzz about DMX, and I asked my friends for an introduction," he explains. Lyor Cohen, president of the Island Def Jam Music Group, says, "He understands the background, pain, and struggle that his clients go through."

Louise West, president of West Entertainment, notes that Middleton is a born leader. "A lot of young artists," she says, "are drawn to that aspect of his personality."

Middleton is not unaware of his exceptional status. "A young black guy growing up in Harlem who's the first in his family to go to college starts his own law firm—unfortunately, it's an exception to the norm," he says. Maybe that's why he wants to be respected as a lawyer first. "If people respect me," he says, "then I don't mind if they think of me as a guy who likes to hang out and enjoy himself."

3 THE NOVELIST

ROB REULAND, 37, senior assistant district attorney, Kings County Homicide Bureau, and author of *Hollowpoint* (Random House, 2001)

Rob Reuland has the law firm Brown & Wood to thank for his success. Like many other young lawyers in their first jobs, Reuland found himself trapped in a conference room rifling through other people's files, making copies, and summarizing documents. He often worked late into the night, under the supervision of a paralegal, and slept during the day: "You graduate from law school and think you're a star, but you realize what you are is a cog that generates capital." Desperate for a creative outlet, he wrote part of a novel about a female penal colony in eighteenth-century colonial Australia. "I approached it as if it were a law-review article," he says of the abandoned manuscript, adding that his wife liked it.

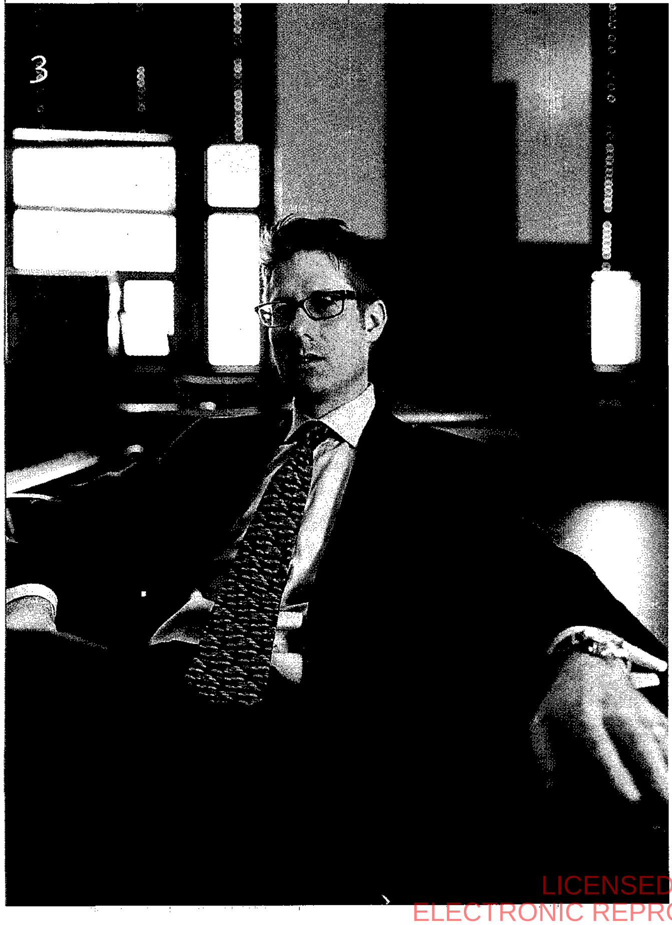
Then, in 1996, Brown & Wood made it clear that he had no future as a partner. So he landed a job in the Brooklyn D.A.'s office and was eventually promoted to the Homicide Bureau. It was there he found the raw material for his first complete novel, a dark and affecting legal thriller.

Reuland wrote *Hollowpoint* in nine months, then spent most of a year revising. In January 2000, he sent a letter to William Morris agent Jennifer Rudolph Walsh. "He was literally one of the only people I've taken on who had no references," she says. "When I first read the book, I was so blown away I thought some established writer had sent it to me as a joke." Walsh scooped him up, then turned around and sold the book to the highest bidder: Random House. Walsh describes the auction as "my biggest in ten years; everybody participated. It was a highlight of my career."

Hollowpoint tells the story of an assistant district attorney in mourning over the accidental death of his daughter. A new case—the shooting death of a 14-year-old girl—threatens to unravel what remains of his life. Reuland makes this fairly low-key story remarkable by his fierce and vivid depiction of the world he knows: the cops, the perps, the "pross."

"Brooklyn is the best place to be a homicide prosecutor," he says. "We've got more dead bodies per square inch than anyplace else."

And dead bodies are still the stuff of Reuland's day job, which he has no plans of giving up. "I derive the same level of satisfaction from being a prosecutor as I do from writing. They're good counterpoints to each other. You get perspective in this job about what's important. This is just a book. No blood was shed writing it. No one died."



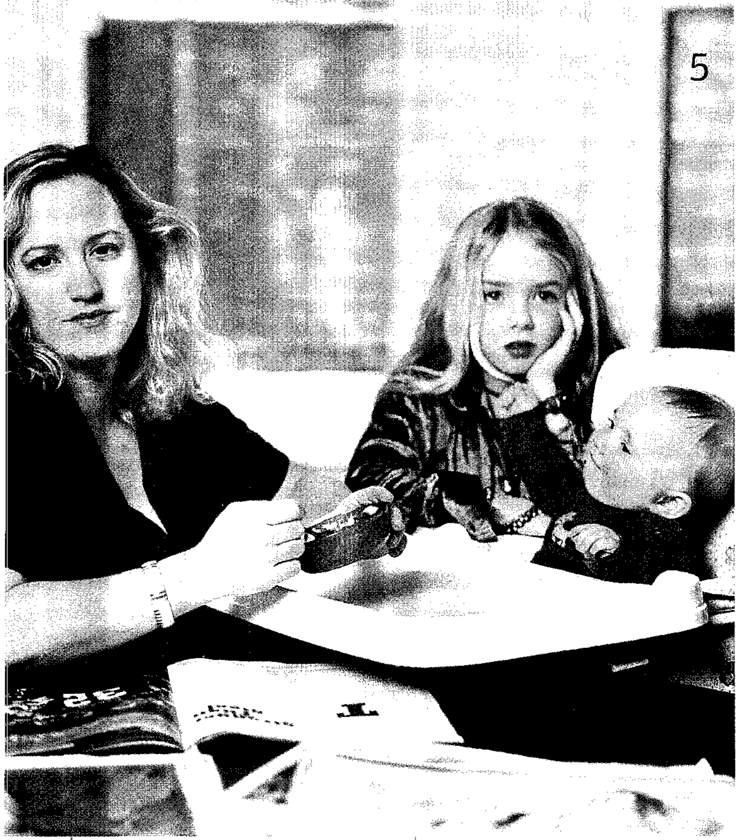
4 THE CORPORATE LAWYER

FAIZA SAEED, 35, partner, Cravath, Swaine & Moore

The line between law and banking gets thinner and thinner, with lawyers crossing over all the time. For one thing, there's more money in banking: Top investment bankers can easily add another zero to the lawyer's seven-figure salary. For another, the job of investment banker doesn't seem that different to lawyers on the same side of a deal. Both negotiate and advise clients over the terms of a merger or an acquisition.

Faiza Saeed hasn't made the jump yet, even though her mentor, former Cravath partner Rob Kindler, is now a managing director at Chase JP Morgan. "I like being in the role of counselor," she explains. "Where you get to know your client so well you're consulted on matters outside the deal." It's that type of commitment that has made her the "go to" person for DreamWorks, a client she has represented since its incorporation, according to COO Ron Nelson. Bob Davis, the former CEO of Terra Lycos (and current vice-chairman), says, "We've always viewed her as a business partner." She has also represented, in the past year alone, Time Warner in its merger with AOL, Vivendi in its acquisition of Seagram's, and Lycos in its merger with Terra Networks: an amazing client list for any lawyer, even more amazing considering that Saeed is 35 and made partner only two years ago.

The daughter of Pakistani immigrants, Saeed majored in molecular biology in college (Berkeley) and almost followed her older sister into medical school. But she took a few economics classes and fell in love with the subject, majoring in that too. It was the eighties, and econ was hot. Law school (Harvard) seemed the ideal place to combine this love with her desire to learn a profession.



"Faiza is there for us day or night, 365 days a year," says Davis. In the acquisition of ABC by Disney, the Cravath team, on which she was an associate, got the call from Michael Eisner and Warren Buffett on a Thursday, and had until Sunday night to put the deal together. "Now everyone wants that kind of speed," she says. "Its the nature of M&A work. Everyone wants the deal done before it goes away."

Now, though she doesn't make a banker's salary, she doesn't do too badly (average profits per partner at Cravath last year were $2.1 million). And she is worth it. "She never over-lawyers deals, and she has great business sense," says Kindler, who thinks his former protégée is the best young M&A lawyer in the country: "She's almost as good as me."

5 THE COWBOY

HILLARY RICHARD, 41,
partner, Brune & Richard

"There's nothing better than bringing somebody who deserves it to their knees," says plaintiffs' attorney Hillary Richard, who sued *Spin* magazine and Robert Guccione Jr. for sexual harassment and discrimination on behalf of research editor Staci Bonner.

Richard likes a good fight. She'd better. In her practice, she routinely goes up against the city's top employment-defense firms with their armies of young lawyers in cases that can drag on long enough for entire lives to change. "Put it this way," she says: "I met Staci before I was pregnant, and the case was resolved last year when my daughter was 6."

Staci Bonner was just one of the aggrieved individuals whose cases Richard handled while a partner at the firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky & Lieberman, founded by legendary civil-rights litigator Leonard Boudin. Although the firm specialized in First Amendment cases and other civil-rights matters, Richard basically created an employment-law practice, suing the New York Assembly on behalf of a female employee who later testified in front of a commission convened by then-governor Mario Cuomo to investigate allegations of sexual harassment in the Assembly (this before Monica Lewinsky was a twinkle in Bill Clinton's eye).

Since the *Spin* case, Richard has ventured out on her own with Harvard Law classmate and former assistant U.S. Attorney Susan Brune. "She's the neat one," Richard observes about her partner, who specializes in white-collar-criminal-defense work. Richard's practice consists primarily of employment work, but she also does securities cases and other commercial cases, all on behalf of plaintiffs. (For the record, she's the messy one.) Richard also provided regular commentary for Fox News during the Paula Jones trial.

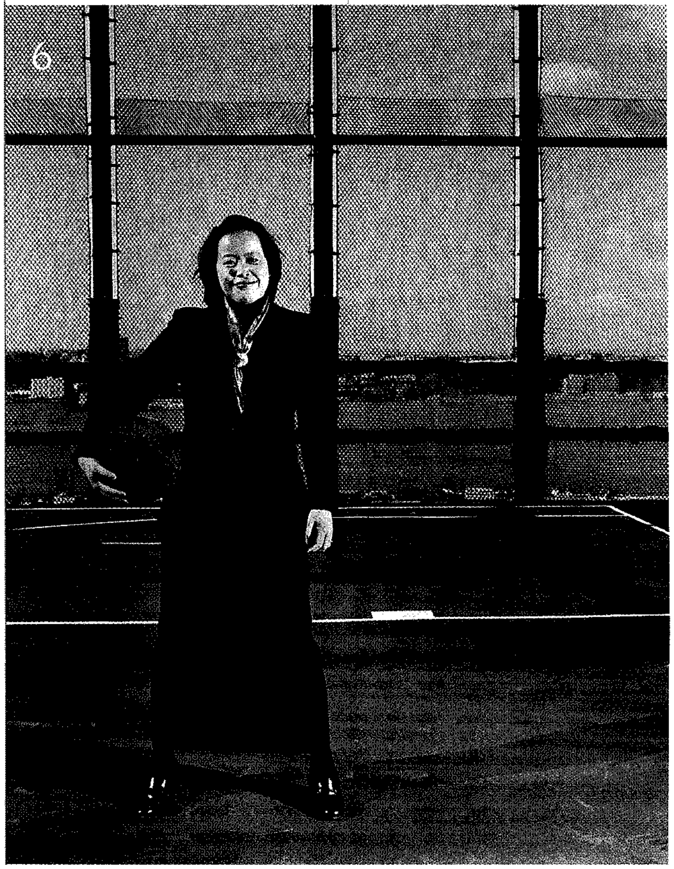
The federal district court, which awarded Richard more than $750,000 in attorneys' fees in the *Spin* case (later reduced on appeal), commended Richard for providing "extraordinarily strong legal representation for the plaintiff." Even Bettina Plevan, the Proskauer Rose partner who represented *Spin* and Guccione, called Richard "a tenacious trial lawyer."

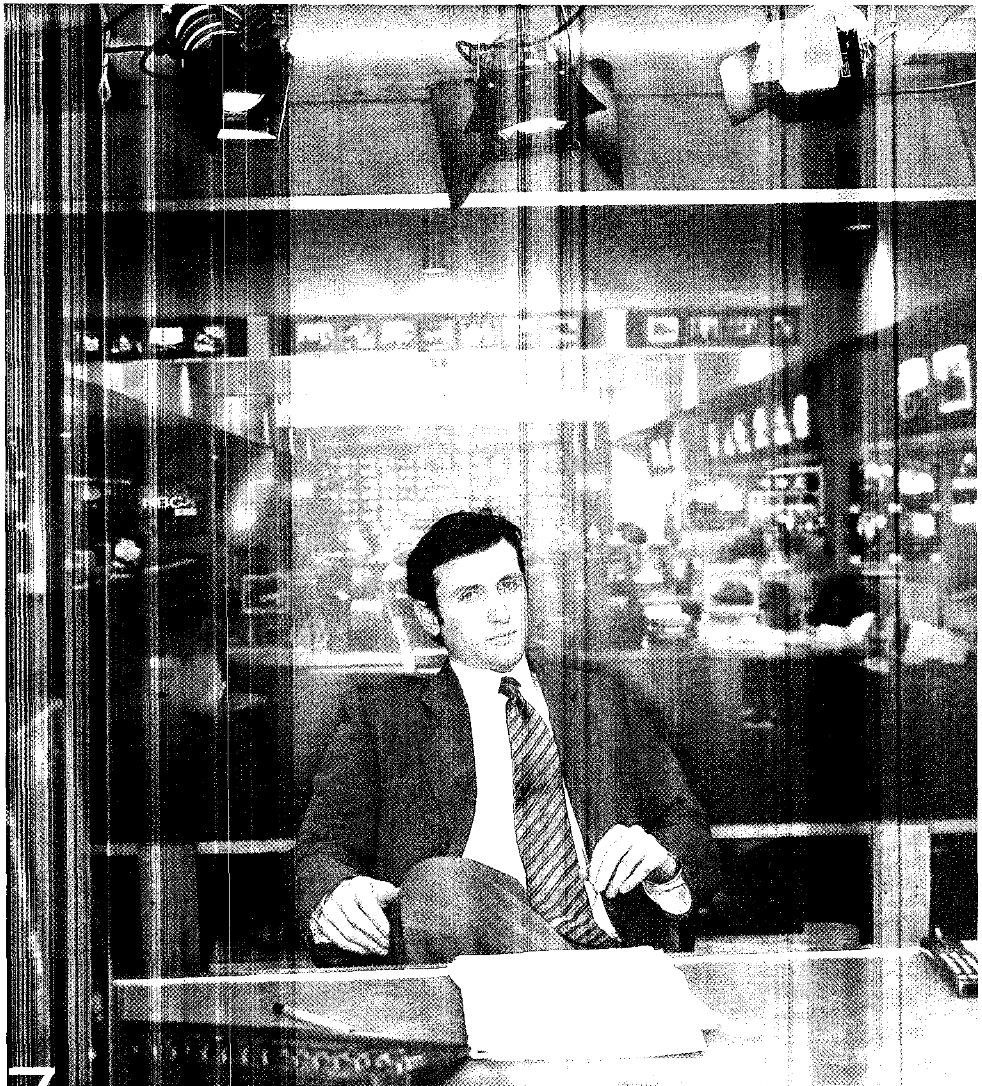
The inverse of parents who push their offspring to be lawyers—or marry one—Richard's parents disapproved of her career choice. Mom, a poet, and Dad, a rare-book dealer, would have preferred to see their daughter in a more bohemian occupation. Instead, she married actor and playwright Peter McCabe and has represented Allen Ginsberg and other Beats. The couple have two children, the youngest of whom was born this summer. The hardest thing about running your own practice? "Not giving myself a maternity leave," says Richard.

6 THE COUNSEL

ELIZABETH WANG, 34,
vice-president and general counsel, DoubleClick

Many lawyers escape the unpleasant aspects of private practice by jumping to an in-house job at a corporation. There are no partners flogging armies of associates, no pressure to be a rainmaker, and the hours are usually saner. Unless





7 THE PUNDIT

DAN ABRAMS, 34, chief legal correspondent

Tom Brokaw admits to slipping: Sometimes he calls Dan Abrams "Danny." "I've known him since he was 14 years old," Brokaw explains. The son of litigator Floyd Abrams has, in some sense, been around the media his entire life. "My dad had a big influence on my life," he says. "He was happy and successful, and made a career in law look attractive." Still, when Abrams graduated from Columbia Law School in 1992, he was, like many of his contemporaries, confused. With job offers from Willkie Farr & Gallagher; Loretta Preska, a federal judge; and a new cable-television network called Court TV, Abrams wrestled with his choices. In the end, Abrams took a chance on Court TV—and never looked back.

"I got lucky," he says. "I graduated when Court TV was starting, and Court TV's main reporter, Terry Moran, happened to be abroad when the O. J. Simpson trial started." Abrams's coverage of the Simpson case led, eventually, to his position at NBC News.

Steven Brill, the founder of Court TV, gave him his start. "I love him," says Brill. "He's very smart under pressure, very ambitious in exactly the right way. Unlike a lot of correspondents, he knows when to say he doesn't know something."

But it was the election crisis that gave Abrams his star turn, with a nightly half-hour program on MSNBC, *Legal Showdown,* that wrapped up the legal maneuvering of the day. For more than 30 days, he was on-air every evening, culminating in the night he read the Supreme Court decision live. "I really didn't have time to think," he says. "In retrospect, I should have been more nervous."

Brokaw praises Abrams's work as "smart and always right. He got to the essence of things, and did not speak in legalese." In addition to regular appearances on *Today* and the nightly news, Abrams has been filling in for Geraldo Rivera on *Rivera Live.* Brill predicts Abrams will end up as an anchor. Heady stuff, but as Abrams explains, "There's a lot of grunt work, just like with every other job. A lot of travel to not-so-exotic locations, and long hours and stress. Lawyers think of my job as glamorous; it's not. But it sure is fun."

you're Elizabeth Wang, the general counsel of DoubleClick, the Internet marketing-and-advertising company.

"It used to be that people thought of in-house jobs as the easy road," says Nigel Howard, a partner at the New York office of Brobeck, Phleger & Harrison, DoubleClick's primary outside firm. "But here that's so far from reality. Elizabeth took on huge pressures in building the company.

"She was involved in everything. Each step of the way, she was bearing workloads of scary proportions," concurs Andrew Erlichson, the founder of Flashbase, an Internet sweepstakes company that DoubleClick just acquired. "During the acquisition, we were doing a lot of Instant Messaging at two in the morning. I'm glad she's on our side now."

Wang was the first lawyer hired by DoubleClick, and she has built the legal department into a staff of sixteen. This year, she has had to weather a firestorm of bad publicity from privacy advocates. And the Federal Trade Commission investigated DoubleClick's proposed acquisition of Abacus Direct with an eye to the potential misuse of "cookies"—those pesky files that keep track of an Internet user's path across the Web. (The FTC recently dropped its inquiry.) Then she faced several lawsuits challenging DoubleClick's patents for advertising delivery. Still, she sees her greatest challenge as managing the growth of a company that's gone from 300 to 2,000 employees in a little more than two years.

"Working here feels like dog years," Wang says. "Everything changes so much that you have to check your SEC filings from three months ago because what you said about the company may no longer describe it."

Wang, a New Yorker by birth, went to Columbia Law School, then followed her boyfriend (now husband) to San Francisco. But after three years of missing her family—

not to speak of all the first-run movies that don't open there—she came home. Three years at law firm Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton followed, and then a stint in the law department at Simon & Schuster, before she went to DoubleClick in June 1998.

Unlike in a firm or a traditional corporate job, Wang says, she gets to work with "salespeople just out of college, who are still having keg parties; engineers with Ph.D.'s from Stanford; and investment bankers on a daily basis. A lot of problems are not legal, but people come to me with issues and want to bounce off ideas." All of it keeps Wang from having time to think about the future. "Five years from now is an eternity in the Internet. In the next twelve months, I just want to focus on the projects I'm working on and have time to plant a vegetable garden in my summer house."

8 THE MOGUL

PAMELA THOMAS-GRAHAM, 37, president and COO, CNBC

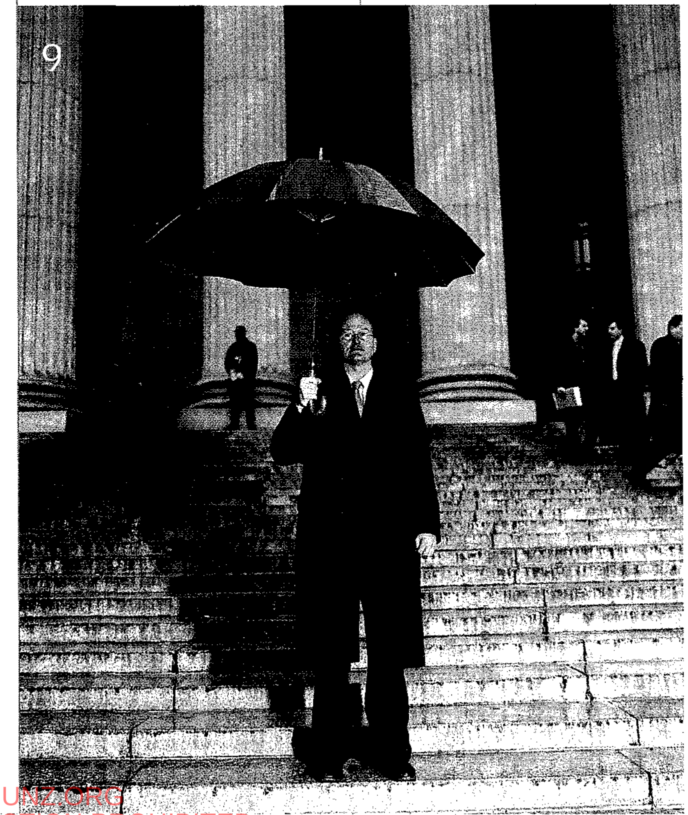
For college grads without a specific vision of their future, law school can be the path of least resistance. Three years, and they figure it will keep their options open. Three years later, most are practicing law. Not Pamela Thomas-Graham. The Harvard triple threat (B.A., J.D., M.B.A.) never practiced law a day in her life.

"I grew up in Detroit in the sixties, and all our heroes were lawyers of the civil-rights movement," she says. "Thurgood Marshall was a kind of mythical figure. If I hadn't gotten the law degree, I would have felt a sense of regret." And a legal education helped her think logically, write well, and ask questions: "All those things that are important in the business world," she says.

Thomas-Graham spent ten years at consulting firm McKinsey & Co. and was the firm's first female African-American partner. "It took a lot of guts and persistence to do what she did," senior director Andrew Parsons says. "She set very high standards and was able to do a lot of things simultaneously." Indeed, in her spare time, Graham, who is married to writer Lawrence Otis Graham, has written two novels ("He writes nonfiction, and I write fiction, so it keeps the peace"). Lauren Tyler, a partner at Quetzal/JP Morgan, a private equity fund, who has known Thomas-Graham since business school, says, "She's able to accomplish more than three human beings."

Thomas-Graham left McKinsey because she wanted to manage a business. "I was coming up on my tenth anniversary," she says, "and I felt like it was time to jump out of the nest and do it." A number of CEOs at media companies have law degrees, including Bob Wright of NBC. "I think it's because a lot of these companies are growing through mergers," Thomas-Graham notes, "and it helps to be familiar with how that's done. I'm not afraid to ask questions with legal implications, and I'm not going to be led astray with legal questions."

After only eighteen months as CEO of CNBC.com, Thomas-Graham was promoted on February 5 to her current position. As for the future, Parsons points out that G.E./NBC has a reputation for developing top-level managers. "They've obviously picked her as one of their upcoming talents," he notes. "She's young enough, and smart enough, that someday she could become CEO of a top public company."



9 THE PROSECUTOR

PATRICK SMITH, 39, assistant U.S. Attorney, Southern District of New York

The coolest part of his job, says assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Smith, "is to stand up in court and say you represent the United States government." The most daunting part is the responsibility for other people's lives. "You'd throw your humanity out the window if you didn't think about the effect of sending someone to jail," he says. "I hope I never get so hardened that I ask for jail every time I can."

It is prosecutorial discretion, and its judicious use, that most impressed defense lawyer and DNA expert Peter Neufeld about Smith. "Pat was willing to take a second look at what essentially was an old story," says Neufeld of a case he had with Smith. Instead of asking the court for jail time for a drug offense, Smith agreed to a plea bargain that allowed Neufeld's client out on probation.

"What Smith did had a tremendous impact on a young man's life," Neufeld says. "Instead of going to prison, my client remained out and, happily, has never been rearrested. He went to college, did extremely well academically, and is now considering graduate education. None of that would've happened if Pat had not stepped back from the meat market and looked at the individual."

But Smith is no softy. He recently won a 30-year sentence against Patrick Bennett (now on appeal) for orchestrating the largest Ponzi scheme in United States history—an investment scam that defrauded more than 10,000 investors and 70 banks throughout the country out of more than $700 million. He is currently the lead prosecutor in "Operation Uptick," a case brought against 120 defendants, including members and associates of New York's five organized-crime families, for securities fraud and related crimes—the largest number of defendants arrested at any one time in a securities case.

The defendants are accused of running stock "boiler rooms" and cheating investors out of millions of dollars by, among other techniques, manipulating the price of micro-cap stocks on the Internet. Last week, the lead defendant pleaded guilty to racketeering.

"Pat was clearly the one with the strategic global outlook," Robert Khuzami, the chief of the securities-fraud unit, says, crediting Smith. "He put the case together."

A Columbia Law graduate, Smith got his start at Davis Polk & Wardwell with partner and Whitewater prosecutor Robert Fiske Jr. The two worked together on a nine-month criminal trial in Miami before Fiske was named independent counsel. "Pat was a very important part of that team," says Fiske of his decision to take Smith with him to Arkansas. "He essentially made the case against an appraiser named Palmer, who pleaded guilty and became a cooperative witness against the two McDougals. He's one of the best young prosecutors in the Southern District."

10 THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

JAN ROSTAL, 37, staff attorney, Federal Defenders Division of the Legal Aid Society

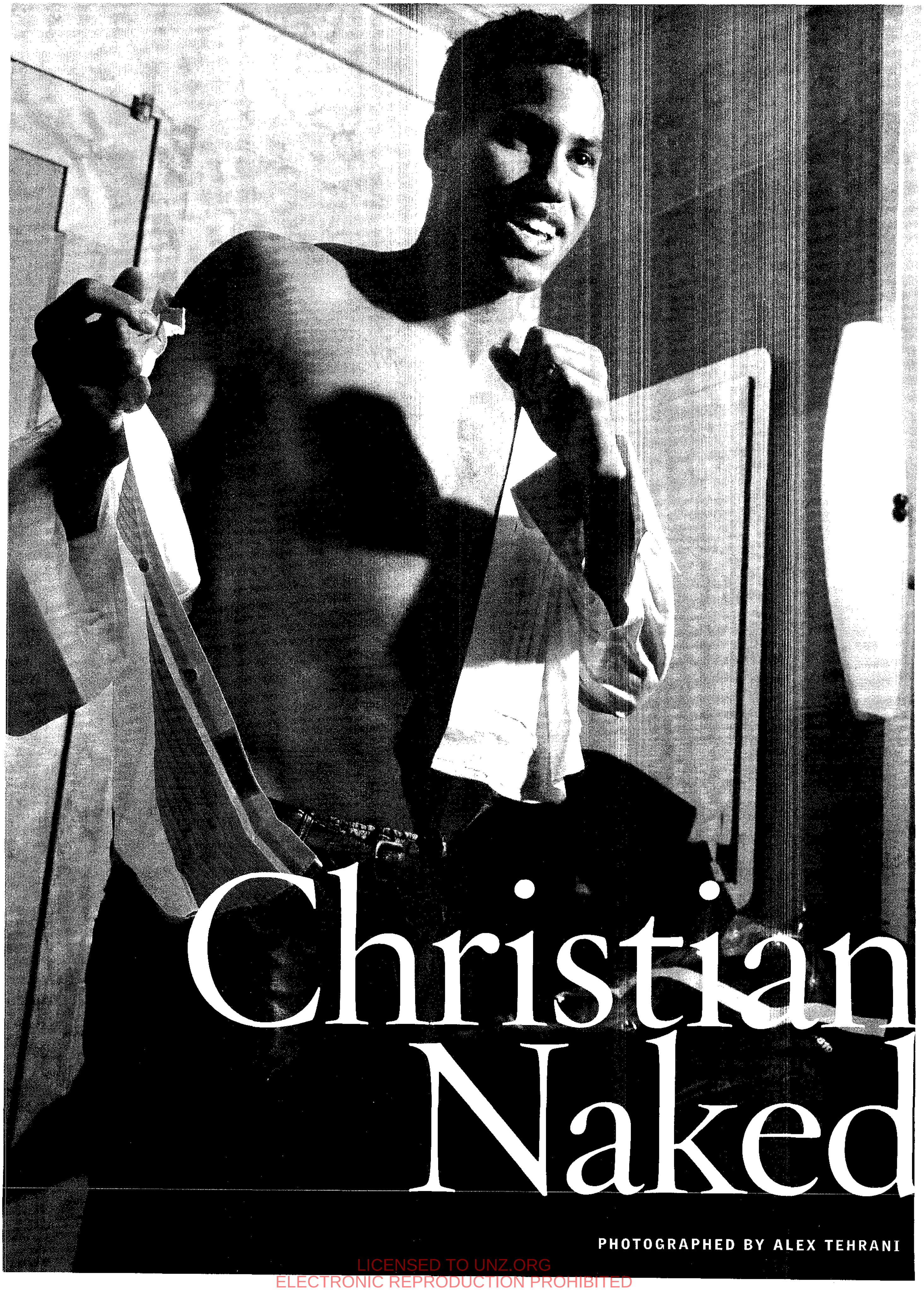
It takes a certain kind of person to battle overwhelming odds and lose again and again, especially on behalf of unpopular clients, like drug dealers and terrorists. "You get overwhelmed by people thinking you're the enemy," says Jan Rostal, who represented Gazi Abu Mezer, accused of conspiring to bomb the New York subway system. "You have to believe in what you're doing, and that it has some role in keeping the government honest. It helps, too, to have a little bit of the rebel in you."

That spirit has kept Rostal in the federal defenders' office in Brooklyn for most of ten years (with brief sabbaticals as an anchor on Court TV and a stay in Mexico to learn Spanish), where she handles the defense of individuals accused of federal crimes (e.g., terrorism, racketeering) who cannot afford their own attorney. "If you're looking for a job where you win all the time," she says, "this isn't it." For her, winning comes in the sentencing phase, when she can put the person, not the crime, before the court.

"The difference between practicing in state and federal court," says Peter Quijano, a defense lawyer and partner at Carro, Velez, Carro & Mitchell, who has tried cases with Rostal, "is the difference between dentistry and surgery. Federal-court cases are much more complex, and the penalties are more severe. What Jan does is very, very difficult work. There are thousands of lawyers in this town, but not that many who can do what she does in federal court."

Most of Rostal's clients have been charged with various drug offenses, because the federal courts in the Eastern District of New York, where she practices, encompass a major drug entry point, Kennedy Airport. It disturbs her that films like *Traffic* portray drug dealers as ruthless killers. "These are people with purely economic motives who are more likely victims of violence than perpetrators of it," she claims. "For many of them, I'm the only person they have.

"A lot of people ask me at parties when I'm going to grow up, as if this job is an internship," she says. But she has no plans to go into private practice: "I don't want to work for people with money." ■



Christian Naked

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALEX TEHRANI

Curry's Ambition

It's been a whirl of stretch limos, Veuve Clicquot, and $1,000-a-plate charity dinners for Christian Curry ever since his scandalous case with Morgan Stanley was settled. So what if the firm claims they didn't pay him a dime? He's the life of the party.

By Vanessa Grigoriadis

ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE WAS A KID named Christian Curry, and he was humiliated in the worst possible way. It was 1998, and Curry, a 23-year-old junior analyst at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter & Co., had the misfortune of having nude photos of himself, aroused, appear in *Playguy* magazine—"my naked ass for all the world to see," as he puts it. Though he claimed he had no knowledge that the shots would be published (they'd been taken in college, when he was pursuing a modeling career), he was fired, allegedly for padding expenses. He then filed suit, alleging discrimination on the basis of race and sexual orientation (he's straight, but the magazine that published the pics is for a gay audience); he was featured in hundreds of articles, on CNN and network TV, and even in a thinly veiled *Law & Order* episode. Finally, the announcement last fall: The Curry case had been settled. Morgan Stanley would donate $1 million to the National Urban League, a nonprofit devoted to the promotion of diversity. But the ex-financier himself wouldn't be compensated.

No one, of course, believed this.

"This is Morgan's statement: 'We paid Curry nothing! *Nothing!*' " says Curry, adopting a booming bass like Ed McMahon's. He snorts. "And who am I to argue?"

But try as Morgan Stanley might, its public claims have been belied by the recent transformation of Curry from social pariah to Richie Rich. The party started the week of the settlement, when Curry arrived at a victory dinner at Harry Cipriani in a limo strewn with rose petals; it built steam as he bought two Ferraris, a Porsche, a Range Rover, and a Mercedes; and it's still on in mid-January, when he arrives at Le Cirque 2000 with his 23-year-old assistant, Stephanie, and publicist, David Granoff, whose other famous client is Anna Nicole Smith. "The last time I came here was for a Morgan closing party," Curry says with a smirk.

After settling in a purple velvet banquette—"best table in the house," Granoff observes—Curry gazes around the fairy-tale room, smiling happily. He sips a kir royale, peruses the menu ("What's halibut?" he asks), and orders tub after tub of caviar. "I've never had caviar," confesses Stephanie. "It's one of those little-kid things—I always said I wouldn't eat it."

"But it's awesome," says Curry. "You've got to try some!"

Finally, she nibbles a little, and pronounces it "awesome," too.

Holding court in the cozy, tony environs of Le Cirque, Curry seems every bit the upwardly mobile banker he was destined to become before what he calls the "tragedy." Raised in Chappaqua, the son of a surgeon, Curry resembles Tiger Woods in body type, skin color, and cocky carriage. As he tells cute anecdotes about his fiancée, a

Cardozo law student he's nicknamed "Snugglebear," Curry is funny, kind, and always upbeat, very much the popular athletic guy in the popular athletic frat that he was at Columbia University and, earlier, at Northfield Mount Hermon, where he played basketball, baseball, and football.

But there is one topic about which Curry loses his cool: "People are saying, 'This guy Curry, spoiled little bitch, never worked a day in his life, and now he's a multimillionaire,' " he snarls. "Well, bull*shit*! I'd never go through that again, whether they paid me zero dollars"—and now he speaks very, very slowly—"or $52 million."

SO—HYPOTHETICALLY SPEAKING, OF COURSE—what, exactly, does a 26-year-old guy do with, say, $52 million in cash and stock?

For Curry, plans include (but are in no way limited to) corporate investing, venture capitalism, money management, movie production, magazine publishing, modeling, and buying a "bunch of stuff," like a Hamptons club, TriBeCa lofts, and a downtown restaurant. His only business venture so far, however, has been purchasing *The Black Star News*, a four-year-old weekly originally bankrolled by Bill Cosby and intended to compete with *The Amsterdam News*. In addition to paying the bills (Curry spent $2 million for 51 percent of the business), he's now writing a column as well, so, on a rainy February morning, Curry heads to the Puffy Combs trial, in a chauffeured black Mercedes with tinted windows.

His driver pulls up to the courthouse's media entrance. "Stop right in front," he commands. "The cameraguys will think we're Puffy!"

The driver does as told, and TV crews scramble to hoist their gear as Curry doubles over in laughter.

> "I went a little nuts at first, buying all those cars. Now I've got guys looking out for me so I don't turn into M.C. Hammer."

Afterward, he proceeds to the Reebok club—while he works out, he insists on treating me to a pedicure—but before this, he's got one more stop: "Miramax," he tells the driver.

"Check this out: A friend from prep school and I were at a Mobil in Mamaroneck, and in comes Harvey Weinstein. He's standing at the checkout with a six-pack of doughnuts, and I'm like, 'Harvey! Harvey Weinstein!' And he's like, 'How ya doing.' So we talk for a while, and then he goes—exact words—'Gimme a call, I'll introduce you to Tina Brown at *Talk*.' "

So Curry is figuring that before the meeting he should drop off some copies of *Black Star*, to impress the guy. After he waits a half-hour in the lobby, Weinstein's assistant calls and says come on up. Edward Furlong sits nearby as Curry hands the underling his crumpled envelope.

"Harvey'll get that, right?" says Curry.

"Yup," says the assistant brightly. "Talking to me is like talking to him."

Back in the lobby, Curry passes Robert De Niro. "Hi, Mr. De Niro," he exclaims.

"Aaarrrrh," grunts De Niro.

FOR ALL THE TALK OF WHAT HE IS GOING TO have, right now Curry doesn't seem to have much. Though he says he's negotiating a deal for a Trump Tower three-bedroom ("It makes you want to make love," he says), he's just moved into a very bare TriBeCa loft. The sum of his belongings are an unmade bed, a golden Lab puppy, a stack of men's magazines, and "a 1,000-watt stereo," he yelps. "Check it out!"

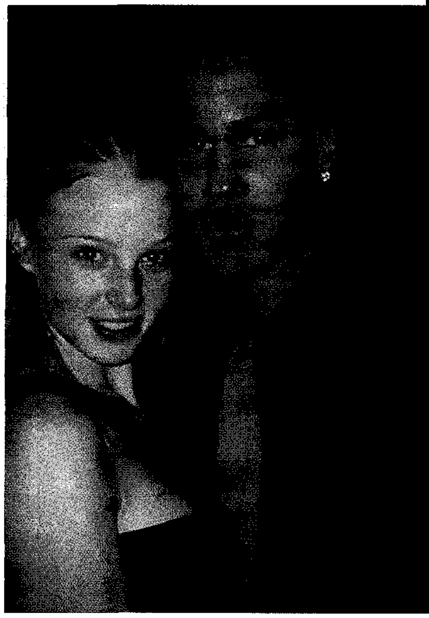
If there's little evidence of the high life here, it's because Curry doesn't actually control his money—yet. It's in his lawyers' hands until he's 35. "I went a little nuts at first, with all these cars," he says. "Now I have people looking out for me, so I don't turn into M.C. Hammer."

Having someone else hold the purse strings makes some sense, because Curry has a habit of getting into trouble. Last October, for example, Spa club promoter Scott Sartiano says Curry violated a restraining order against Sartiano, whom Curry was convicted of harassing when he pushed him through a window three years ago. Sartiano is now suing for $4 million. "In some ways, Christian is an adult," says Benedict Morelli, Curry's civil lawyer, with whom he has a paternal relationship (Curry won't discuss his own parents). "In other ways, he's a boy."

It's hard to know if he really plays basketball with Jay-Z or hangs with Russell Simmons, as he says he does. Does he own five cars or one, as friends report? Does Weinstein really want to take a meeting? (Weinstein's office says a conversation with *Talk* was proffered, but not necessarily with Brown.) Leafing through a magazine, Curry points to a new Guess? model: "I'm taking her out," he boasts.

It's only fair to cut the kid some slack: After a two-year legal battle under intense media scrutiny, is it such a crime to enjoy the spoils of wealth and notoriety? Though Curry might appear confident, the responses he provokes are not always sympathetic, especially on one recent night at the meatpacking-district nightclub Lotus, where he earns stares from young guys in suits and loosened ties, including a couple of Morgan Stanley analysts who say that they're "repulsed by him," particularly by the idea that he "could've gotten more money than we'll see in our lifetimes." One can only imagine their reactions to the first issue of *Gotham*, a new city magazine for which Curry posed wearing nothing but a Morgan Stanley baseball cap over his privates.

You can chalk that photo up to bad taste, the thrill of his newfound status, a certain boyish, almost Bushian, immaturity—or you can blame it on Curry's thirst for revenge. It's this kind of poor judgment that damaged his credibility in the Morgan Stanley mess: After he was fired, he allegedly participated in a plan to bolster his suit by planting racist e-mails in Morgan Stanley's computers with Charles Joseph Luethke, an acquaintance who occasionally crashed at his old frat house.



CURRY IN A HURRY Left to right, Curry with friend Princess Victoria; with girlfriend, model Rachel Nichols; with a model during Fashion Week.

But this time, it was Morgan Stanley's turn to show bad judgment: The alleged scheme imploded when it was revealed that Luethke had been paid $10,000 by Morgan Stanley for his role in the plot. This led to the resignation of the firm's general counsel in June 1999, as well as a media war that never seems to end. Just two weeks ago, Morgan Stanley sent out a memo to all 62,679 employees, reiterating that they didn't pay Curry "a penny." And Luethke recently filed a suit against the firm, alleging coercion of testimony. He'd like $500 million.

CHRISTIAN CURRY ARRIVES AT THE PLAZA A bit late for the $1,000-per-plate dinner at which Carl McCall is announcing his gubernatorial candidacy. His guests (all of whom he's paid for) include an NBC medical reporter, a Mercedes exec, a bodyguard, plus—surprise, surprise—the Guess? model, Rachel Nichols. Curry calls her "Muffin," she calls him "Button," and he bought her a diamond tennis bracelet and pendant worth $40,000 at Tiffany & Co. for Valentine's Day (no, really—I saw him do it). "The best part about Muffin?" he says. "She doesn't know that I'm the Naked Gay Guy." She does know about Snugglebear, but the engagement is off—at least for tonight.

Curry's appearance here with a six-foot model isn't the only reason he's turning heads: Despite his splashy contributions—like a hundred grand for the John Starks Foundation (for disadvantaged youths)—Curry's relationship with the black community is a complicated one.

Though the Reverend Al Sharpton led a protest for Curry at Morgan Stanley's headquarters on July 15, 1999, his support wasn't to last long. That same night, Sharpton attended a party for *Black Enterprise* publisher Earl Graves. Here, according to deposition testimony, he was approached by a number of black leaders—including Johnnie Cochran; Hugh Price, head of the National Urban League; and Morgan Stanley's Bill Lewis—who said Sharpton "didn't fully understand the Curry situation and what he was getting involved in." Curry says Sharpton never held any further protests on his behalf.

Tonight, however, Curry is feeling only love. He's greeted warmly by Charles Rangel, Percy Sutton, and McCall himself. "I'm a huge fan," says a guest.

"It's nothing," says Curry. "I'm nothing."

Out of the crowd comes a classmate from my high school, Melissa Breitbart Sohn, a married slip of a woman who runs Emma & Me, a jewelry-design business, and just so happens to be the daughter of Curry's criminal-defense attorney. Curry sweeps her up in a big bear hug, and her feet dangle off the floor.

Everyone heads up to the Plaza suite Curry's rented for the night; the bodyguard pops a Veuve Clicquot, a reggae CD goes in the player, and people lollygag on the king-size bed. Muffin changes out of her Gucci snakeskin dress and into jeans; she unzips them to show off her new black thong with a Sisqó appliqué. Curry puts his hand down her pants.

"Get out of there, Christian!" says Breitbart Sohn. "You're drunk."

"I'm drunk on life!" he yells.

There's a lot of off-the-record discussion of deals Curry might or might not do, the money he might or might not have, and the fees he most definitely has to pay Breitbart Sohn's dad. "Did I pay for those shoes?" he asks. "Or this bag? Did I pay for this hair?" He pulls at her highlighted locks. "My father hasn't supported me in a long, long time," she retorts, indignant.

Curry pulls out his cell phone. "People want to hire me, too," he says, and plays a message from an ID Models booker.

As the night grows longer, Curry gets more loose. "All these women throw themselves at me," he tells Breitbart Sohn. "I've got a drawer at home of panties that girls have sent me." He takes a pair of stockings out of his pocket. "Look . . ."

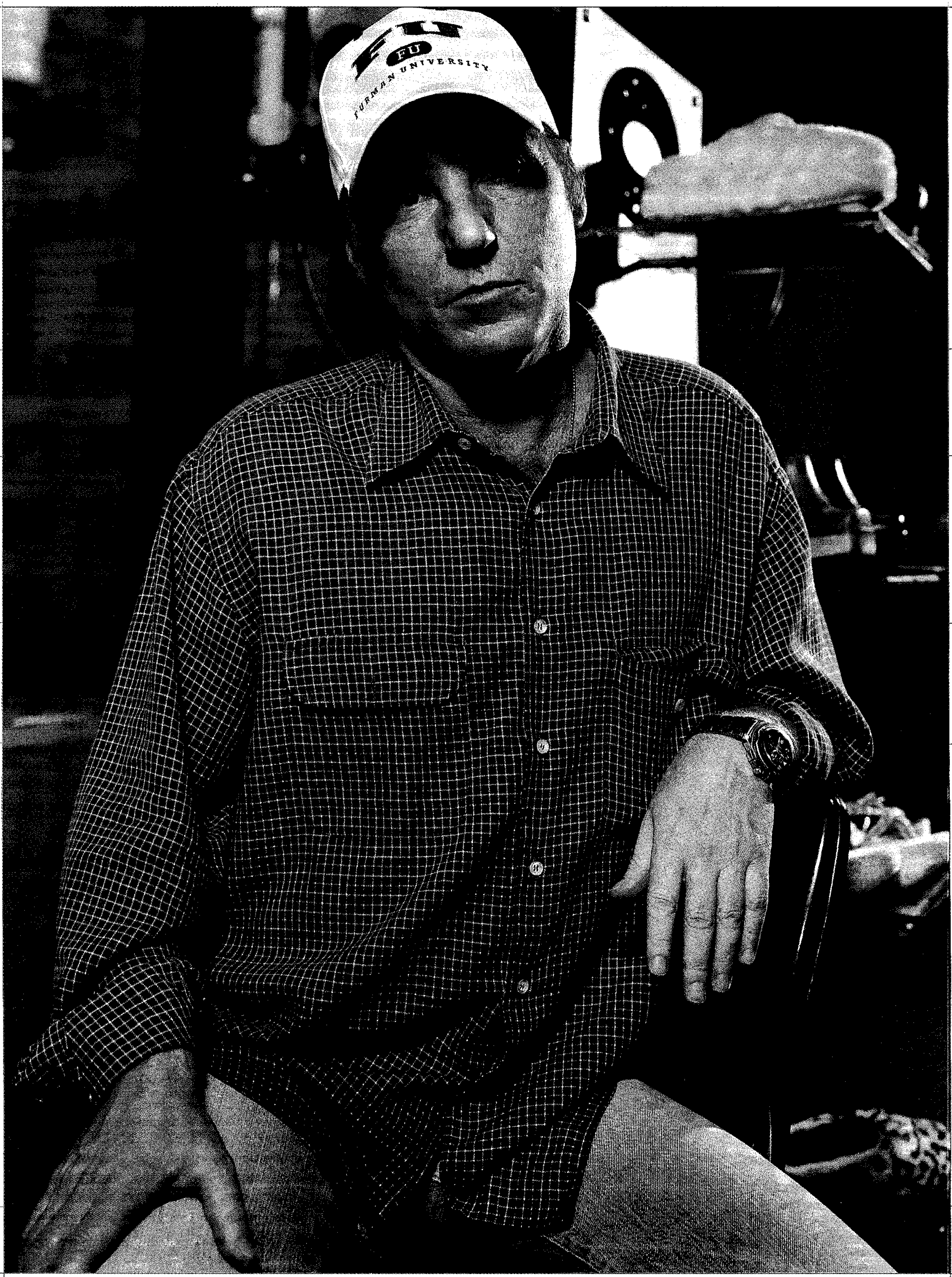
"Christian!" screams Breitbart Sohn. "I *saw* you take those from Muffin's bag!"

"All right," he says, laughing, putting the white cotton crotch to his nose. "But smell them! They smell so good, like a fruit."

After hanging out at the Plaza, the group jumps in Curry's long white limo and heads, once again, to Lotus. This time, they're shown to a good table right away, and Curry orders champagne as Muffin dances on the banquette. When Lotus closes, it's back in the limo to the Plaza suite.

And so on. ■

Photographs: left to right, Alex Tehrani; courtesy Christian Curry; Alex Tehrani.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FURMAN UNIVERSITY

The Long Island shoe salesman who built an empire by catering to the tastes of teenage girls is facing the toughest challenge of his life: an indictment for stock fraud. Who's testifying against him? Only his former best friend. By Johanna Berkman

STEVE MADDEN: CRISIS OF THE SOLE

IT'S LUNCHTIME AT JERRY'S IN SOHO, AND STEVE MADDEN IS SITTING AT HIS REGULAR table, surrounded by loyalists and having a bit of a fit. "I want pink! Not blue!" he's shouting in Long Islandese, holding up a fistful of Equal packets and shaking them in the air. He's joking—well, half-joking anyway—about the lack of Sweet'N Low by quoting from the Hollywood-mogul satire *Swimming With Sharks*. • Outside, twentysomethings stroll down Prince Street lugging tall boxes containing Madden's chunky-heeled version of this season's hot boots. Down below, in the subway, hundreds of ads bear his name and company logo, as well as computer-distorted photographs of doe-eyed teenage hipsters wearing oversize shoes. Tonight, Madden will take his courtside seat at the Knicks game beside his golf buddy and board chairman, Charles Koppelman, the entertainment impresario who recently spearheaded the takeover of Ford Models. • But here at Jerry's, Madden is so jittery he accidentally tears his Knicks ticket in two. Dressed in jeans, a white untucked oxford, and a Syracuse Orangemen baseball cap, the 43-year-old CEO looks unsettlingly

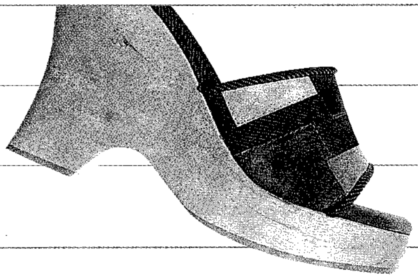
PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANA LIXENBERG

Photographed by Nedjeljko Matura (shoes).

collegiate. “I tell everyone I’m 42!” he shouts, in a voice that’s reminiscent of Richard Simmons and P. T. Barnum. “I lie!” he adds sarcastically. “I don’t know why.” His lawyer winces, and Madden is off on a jag recalling the early days, before he had a $200 million public company, celebrity customers like Julia Stiles, and a die-hard teen following that lines up for hours just to meet him at his stores.

“I worked in Toulouse,” he offers, referring not to France but to “a really hot store in the early seventies” in Cedarhurst, Long Island. “We sold platform shoes for men and women at the time of Ziggy Stardust, Alice Cooper. You remember when Elton had those platforms?” he asks, not waiting for an answer. “I was 16 years old. My boss was 26. He had his own business. He was this really cool guy. He drove a Mercedes. He was my idol.” Madden raises his arms to steer the imaginary Mercedes.

“It was just Providence, you know?” he says. “How lucky can a guy be to fall into a shoe store and make it your life’s work and be good at it? How lucky could a guy be?” Madden turns to his lawyer.



“The story’s sad,” Madden says. “It’s a real American story. My old friends took me public, they turned out to be crooks, and I’m innocent.”

“You tell me,” the lawyer deadpans.

“I don’t feel so lucky right now,” Madden adds quickly. Suddenly humbled, he falls silent.

Last summer, Madden’s luck turned when he was indicted for stock fraud and money laundering in both the Eastern and Southern Districts of New York. According to the charges, Madden secretly purchased stock on behalf of the principals of two corrupt penny-stock brokerage firms—Stratton Oakmont Securities of Lake Success, Long Island, and Monroe Parker, of Purchase, Westchester—helping them manipulate 29 initial public offerings, including that of his own company. That same day, the Securities and Exchange Commission came after him with a civil suit alleging Madden had employed “devices, schemes, and artifices to defraud.” If convicted in either of the criminal cases, which are scheduled to go to trial this spring, Madden faces up to more than twenty years in prison and several million dollars in fines. If he loses the SEC case, which is on hold until the criminal cases are completed, he could be forced to pay millions more. Even worse, he could be barred from serving as an officer or director of any public company, including his own.

On the day of his arrest, while Madden was busy pleading not guilty to all charges and pledging his East Hampton country house and the Long Island homes of two friends in order to make bail, shares of Steve Madden Limited fell almost 15 percent to $11.85 before NASDAQ halted trading. Two days later, when the stock (which trades under the ticker SHOO) reopened, it fell to $6.88. Though the stock has traded up as high as $13.88 due to a recent rally in the footwear sector, it has yet to regain its pre-indictment momentum.

“The story’s sad,” Madden tells me. “It’s a great story. It’s a real American story. My old friends took me public, they turned out to be crooks, and I’m innocent.”

EVEN THOUGH HE’S BEEN INDICTED, MADden is keen to talk. “I’ve always thought I should be in *New York* Magazine,” he told me when I first contacted him in the fall. “I’m a New York story.” His fellow executives weren’t nearly as excited, and it took several calls to the company, as well as to Madden’s personal lawyers, before I could meet him. “People are afraid because I’m candid,” Madden explains. “They’re always worried I’m going to get into trouble.”

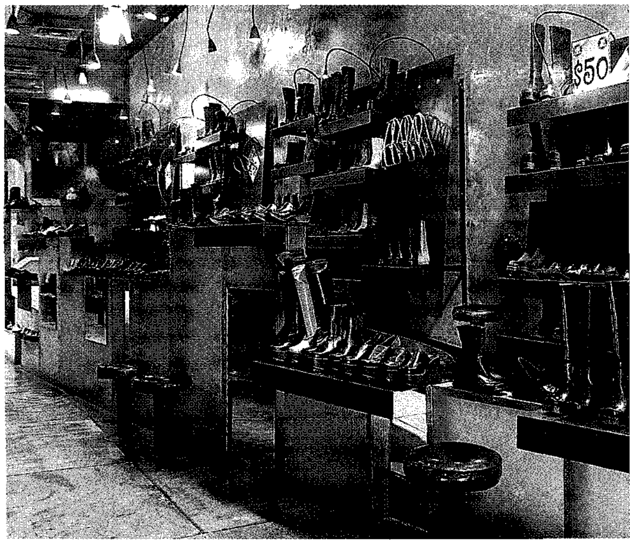
Even in an industry filled with colorful characters, Madden stands out. He speaks a mix of hip-hop lingo, Austin Powers–isms, and words of his own invention. One day in his showroom, he asks me, “You want a little lunchy-poo?” He also has a penchant for inventing nicknames: After our first phone conversation, I’m suddenly “Jo,” then, alternately, “Jo-Jo.”

Although Madden leads the sort of hip, expensive lifestyle you might expect of a rich, single, downtown New Yorker, he has his own quirky trademarks. He gets his wiry strawberry-blond hair cut by downtown stylist Jason Croy, but never appears in public without a baseball cap. He eats at fancy restaurants like EQ, but thinks nothing of whipping out nasal spray mid-meal. (“It’s bad,” he says, conceding he’s been addicted since childhood. “Afrin doesn’t work for me anymore.”) On weekends, when he’s not out at his home in the Northwest Woods or off golfing in Miami or Boca Raton, he likes to hang out at his SoHo flagship. “Sometimes, I’ll be here on a Sunday and I’ll think, *What a loser you are! What am I doing here?*”

Among Madden’s mostly young and female employees, many of whom are his close friends, stories about his shoe obsession are legendary. One morning in his Manhattan showroom, I get to watch him in action. In front of about twenty department-store buyers, he grabs a $69 pair of white *faux* Pumas with a thick rhinestone racing stripe and begins to tell a story. “There’s a girl in the Beverly Center,” he says, “that’s taking Pumas, putting jewels on them, and selling them all over the country.” He pauses for the punch line: “*She’s* charging $300.” For Madden, “the greatest thing in the world is to make shoes, to see people buying something you brought to the market . . . There’s no amount of money that can replace that feeling.”

As one might expect, Madden frequently attests to his innocence, but often with a sense of humor. At one point, after proclaiming “I’m innocent,” he commands me to “put an exclamation point there!” Then he reaches over, grabs my pen, and puts it in himself. One morning, when we’re talking about the battle between Al Gore and George W. Bush, he suddenly declares, “I may have to call one of them up for a pardon one day,” and elbows me hard in the ribs.

While the indictment has severely damaged Steve Madden Limited’s standing on Wall Street—there’s a consolidated class-action shareholder lawsuit pending against the company, and it has hired Bear Stearns to explore “all possible strategic options,” including an outright sale—it hasn’t tarnished Steve Madden’s reputation as a design and marketing genius. “He has some special knack at figuring out what teen girls want to wear," says Sanford Bernstein analyst Faye Landes. According to teen-market consultant Irma Zandl, who ranks Madden with Nike and Adidas in the top five brands that girls favor, his shoes are popular because they are fabulously over-the-top. "Steve Maddens are not for the conservative girl," she says. "If he's going to add leopard skin, he'll do it ten times more outrageously than anybody else. It's for people who think less is less."



Well heeled: Steve Madden's SoHo flagship store.

Every week, Madden still gets more than a thousand e-mails from his customers, only a handful of which refer to his legal predicament. In fact, the company is not only refusing to retrench, it is aggressively expanding. This week, at the Grammy Awards, the company will make a bid for high-profile customers by giving out fluffy leopard-print slippers to special guests. Three days later, at the Western Shoe Association show in Las Vegas, Madden will introduce his newest product line: Steve Madden Mens.

THE LONG ISLAND CITY HEADQUARTERS OF the empire Steve Madden is in danger of losing is an unusual mix of the religious and the mundane. From the outside, the Tudor complex looks like an ordinary Queens building; inside, it's a kind of Jewish teen-girl heaven, with only Madden's shoes outnumbering the ubiquitous mezuzahs. "Steve is very spiritual," explains his assistant, Abby, a raspy-voiced twentysomething with a thick New York accent. A Hasidic rabbi from Greenpoint comes in weekly to do a "mock minyan"; a Hindu pundit, as well as experts in *feng shui,* have come in to bless the premises.

Spanish music blasts on the factory floor, and the pungent odor of shoe polish mixes with the aroma of Kentucky Fried Chicken. Madden's shoes are scattered everywhere—spindly heeled open-backed mules, three-inch-high platform boots, four-inch-high wooden-stacked-heel sandals—and, as I stand in the hallway in thick-heeled green-and-brown Prada pumps, an executive who looks like Barry Manilow proclaims, "We just copied your shoes!"

Tucked into a back corner near customer service, Madden's expansive office is being remodeled. Inside, only twenty pairs of shoes are lined up in tidy rows, and his art—a painting of the New York Stock Exchange depicting Wall Street as a golf course, an autographed picture of Muhammad Ali meeting the Beatles, and a photo of Madden's Lawrence High School golf team—is leaning against the wall.

The hyperactive son of a popular Five Towns couple—his mother was a Jewish homemaker, his father an Irish Catholic textile manufacturer—Madden was more street-smart than studious. "He was an average student," recalls Steven Karp, a family friend. Still, he was "one of the brightest kids we knew," says childhood friend Jamieson Karson, a real-estate lawyer who joined the Madden board last month.

In second grade at P.S.1 in Lawrence, Long Island, Madden and a boy named Danny Porush became best friends. The son of a successful nephrologist, Porush eventually left public school for the private Woodmere Academy, but the two stayed close and remained so for the next three decades.

In high school, while his friends tooled around Lawrence in sports cars their parents had bought them, the middle-class Madden took a job at a shoe store to make some extra cash. The opportunity to meet lots of girls, the thrill of making a sale—"I fell in love with it right away," he recalls.

When not at the store, Madden hung out at the Lawrence Golf Club, perfecting his golf game and trying to fit in with the flashy grown-ups. "He was a wise-guy kid," says a Five Towns attorney who was a member of the club. "He loved gambling." A product of the high-living seventies, Madden also loved drugs and drinking. He went off to the University of Miami in 1975, only to return home two years later when his father called him up and announced, "I'm not paying any more money for you to play golf and take Quaaludes."

Rather than finish college, Madden took a sales job at Jildor, a popular shoe store in Cedarhurst. His former boss, Jan Friedman, recalls him as being "one of the most natural-born salesmen I've ever seen. He could sell anything to anybody." After spending two years "like Al Bundy, with a little shoehorn hanging out of my back pocket," Madden moved to Greenwich Village and took a job at L. J. Simone, a shoe wholesaler known for boots decorated with fringe and *faux* gemstones.

During the next eight years there, Madden expanded his repertoire to include marketing, manufacturing, and design. But his employment came to an end in July 1988; four months later, he got arrested for drunken driving. "I was whacked out," Madden recalls. "Bad things happened when I drank." An attempt to start a new business with a former Simone colleague faltered. But on January 9, 1989, Madden took his last drink. Six months later, he was out on his own. "I wanted to be in charge," he says, "to be a boss."

With only $1,100 in the bank, Madden designed a Western clog called the Marilyn. He used credit to have 500 pairs manufactured and charm to convince his doorman to pose as his chauffeur while he sold samples from the trunk of his car. It was the early nineties, the beginning of the seventies-fashion revival, and Madden's thick-soled shoes quickly caught on. "He had a good eye," recalls Bob Goldenberg, a retired shoe wholesaler who has known Madden for years. "He went through every booth in Europe at the shows."

Madden's breakout hit was the Mary Lou, a patent-leather Mary Jane with a big bump toe that won an instant following among teens. "I started getting calls from mothers all over the tri-state area," he remembers. "Fifteen calls a day. The kids had nothing to wear to the bat mitzvahs, to the confirmations. *This* was something." Before long, like any other successful small businessman, he needed cash to grow.

WHILE MADDEN WAS WORKING HIS WAY UP in the shoe industry, his best friend, Danny Porush, was stuck in a rut. After five years at Boston University, he left

Photograph by Carina Salvi.

without getting a degree and bounced from job to job, working for, and starting up, a variety of small businesses, including an ambulance company called SureRide Ambulette. In 1988, while watching his son in the playground of his Bayside, Queens, apartment complex, he met an unlikely mentor: a dental-school dropout and former door-to-door meat and seafood salesman named Jordan Belfort. A short, brash, young Jewish guy, Belfort boasted he was making $50,000 a month selling penny stocks out of a boiler room in Great Neck. As Porush would later testify, Belfort confided the business was "half a scam," but the chance to increase his income tenfold was a siren call Porush couldn't resist. Two days after they met, he closed down SureRide and joined the firm.

Only two months later, Belfort and Porush opened their own brokerage company in a Queens car dealership (their third partner was a man Belfort had met when they both spent a summer selling ice cream at Jones Beach). With Belfort at the helm, the partners transformed their firm into a business that, at least on the surface, seemed rather impressive: the venerably named and auspiciously located Stratton Oakmont of Lake Success, Long Island.

Using fanciful scripts, the brokers—Belfort's childhood friends from Queens, Porush's golf buddies, money-crazed kids recruited from Long Island college campuses—sold and manipulated tiny, high-risk IPOs, according to testimony, by grossly exaggerating their prospects, boasting that they had inside information, and generally saying whatever was necessary to make a sale. Take those customers "to the mat," Belfort would urge. "Rip their heads off!" Stratton's underwritings encompassed a vast array of low-rent businesses: Repossession Auction, which was a Miami-based used-car dealership; Licon International, possibly so named because in order to sell the stock you had to "lie" and "con"; and Master Glazier's Karate International, an Elizabeth, New Jersey–based martial-arts school with a total of four branches in only two states. Nearly all had the same trading pattern—the stocks would soar when Stratton touted them but then come crashing down when the brokers unloaded their stakes.

IN 1992, STEVE MADDEN MADE A DECISION that at the time seemed natural enough: He hired his best friend's firm to be his banker. While Madden knew that the SEC had already accused Stratton of engaging in price manipulation and employing high-pressure sales tactics, he considered it a legitimate company. "They cleared through Bear Stearns," Madden recalls, pointing out that Stratton's link to the giant firm gave it an aura of respectability. Besides, Stratton was not only willing to raise capital for Steve Madden Limited in the private markets, it wanted to take the tiny, unproven company public. Like his friend Porush, Madden was going to enter the big leagues.

On December 13, 1993, only seven months after the first (and, at that time, only) Steve Madden shoe store had opened on Broadway in SoHo, Stratton Oakmont took the company public at $4 a share. The most active stock on the NASDAQ on the day of its offering, SHOO closed at $8 a share, a huge gain in the pre-Internet era.

Just a few months later, it sunk to $3. With only $5.3 million in sales, a net loss of $900,000, and a boom-bust trading history, the company simply seemed to be another one of Stratton's overhyped IPOs.

But it wasn't. In 1994, Madden surprised his critics. With hardly any advertising, Madden increased sales by almost 40 percent. The next year, sales tripled to $39 million, prompting Madden to hire Rhonda Brown, the former merchandise president of Macy's East, to become his chief of operations. Soon, Madden had celebrity customers—Carmen Electra, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Neve Campbell, Alyssa Milano, Mary J. Blige. By 1997, the company was generating $59 million in total sales, operating seventeen stores, and introducing a clothing line designed for "a customer who doesn't break the law—but does break the rules." That spring, in a lengthy profile in *Footwear News*, Madden compared his company to "an underground rock-and-roll band that gets its first hit single."

MEANWHILE, OVER IN LAKE SUCCESS, Porush and Belfort were struggling to stave off failure. While they were still raking in tens of millions a year from stock manipulations, regulators were working to put Stratton out of business. In March 1994, they nearly did: As part of a settlement with the SEC, Belfort was barred from the securities industry for life. But Porush managed to garner a lighter sanction, barred for just one year from supervising other brokers. In the wake of the ruling, Belfort continued to control the firm through Porush.

Inevitably, though, the relationship between the partners soured. In June 1996, seeking a respite from all the stress, Belfort took his wife and six of his friends for a Mediterranean cruise aboard his 170-foot yacht, which had originally been built for Coco Chanel. Setting out from Rome for Sardinia in the midst of a brutal storm, they nearly drowned when the boat broke in half and sank; they were rescued by the Italian Navy. It was a bad omen: Six months later, Stratton Oakmont was forced to shut its doors. The month after that, in January 1997, the company filed for bankruptcy.

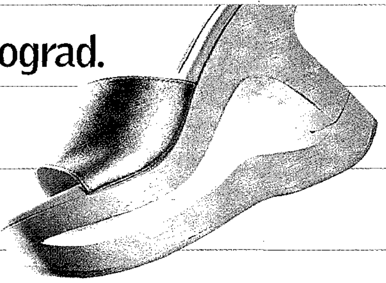
Shoe fetish: A Steve Madden ad.

By that time, Gregory Coleman, an agent in the FBI's securities-fraud squad at 26 Federal Plaza, had been investigating Stratton for several years. In 1995, under instructions from federal prosecutors, Coleman sent out a flurry of subpoenas to some of Stratton's clients, including Madden, in an effort to create a panic that would culminate in a race to the government's door. It didn't work, but in the end, Coleman got lucky.

On a quiet night in 1995, a security guard at Queens Plaza noticed a Bentley and a limousine meeting in the parking

Small steps: Steve Madden and young fans.

"Steve will overcome," vows his lawyer, Joel Winograd. "His company will continue to have record sales and earnings, and this will have a fairy-tale ending."



lot, and the exchange of a bag. Thinking it a drug deal, the guard called the police, who arrested Todd Garrett, a martial-arts expert, with $200,000 in cash. (He was subsequently charged with possession of an illegal handgun.) As Belfort later testified, Garrett happened to be his drug dealer, but according to federal prosecutors, what Garrett was doing that night had nothing to do with drugs; rather, he was functioning as a clearinghouse for Porush and Belfort's illegal proceeds, disbursing them in cash to contacts who would secrete them in their luggage and launder them in Switzerland.

One year later, U.S. Customs officers in Miami arrested a young French private banker who worked for Union Banquaire Privée in Switzerland. The arrest was made as part of an unrelated money-laundering sting operation, but hoping to win a lighter sentence, the banker began to talk. By sheer coincidence, he had two clients who were of particular interest to the government: Jordan Belfort and Danny Porush.

ON SEPTEMBER 2, 1998, JUST A FEW MINutes after pulling out of the driveway of his Old Brookville mansion to take his 5-year-old daughter to the video store, 36-year-old Jordan Ross Belfort was arrested for conspiracy to commit money laundering and securities fraud. The next day, 41-year-old Daniel Mark Porush was nabbed down in Boca Raton. Faced with maximum sentences of twenty years in prison, both men came to the same conclusion: After only a week in jail, they decided to flip.

"It was like taking down the heads of a major crime family," says former assistant U.S. attorney Joel Cohen, the prosecutor in the indictment. "But in this case, the organized crime was the brokerage business." Porush and Belfort secretly wore wires to record their friends and dragged down dozens in their wake: lawyers and accountants, bankers and brokers.

For the government, Steve Madden was one of the biggest catches in the dragnet. The shoe mogul had been a focus of the investigation for some time; the SEC had cited his company's IPO as one of those that had been manipulated, and believed that Madden was routinely getting, and flipping, stock in other Stratton deals.

Although some of Stratton's IPOs had grown into profitable businesses, only Madden's company had become a significant success. But according to Belfort, the celebrity CEO was also a "rat hole," a place to hide stock. Porush, his P.S.1 buddy, didn't hesitate to give him up either. Madden, as he recently testified at the trial of Stratton's former auditor, was "deep into the fraud with us."

According to the Madden indictments, the designer's personal connection to Stratton began in 1991, when Madden agreed to secretly buy and sell stock in Stratton deals on Porush's behalf with "the understanding that he would incur no risk." (Porush, as a principal of the firm, was restricted in his ability to trade stock in these companies.) The deal was that Madden would earn a "predetermined profit on each transaction," then kick back to Porush a significant portion of the proceeds, either in cash or by purchasing stock from Stratton that was deliberately overpriced. Once Belfort was barred from the securities industry in 1994, Madden allegedly entered a similar agreement with him regarding the Stratton spinoff Monroe Parker.

But according to the SEC, Madden wasn't only ripping off the general investing public, he was ripping off his own shareholders as well. In early 1993, the SEC alleges, Madden agreed that the IPO of his company would "be a manipulation similar to previous Stratton IPO manipulations . . . such as Master Glazier's Karate International." In exchange for his agreement to "follow Porush and Belfort's instructions," they allegedly promised "that even if SHOO . . . went bankrupt, Madden would make money on the SHOO IPO."

In addition, as Belfort recently testified at the Stratton auditor's trial, Belfort "had a secret deal with Steve Madden to maintain control of his company after it went public." Because Belfort and his partners had financed Steve Madden Limited's early development, they owned a majority stake in the company before it went public. But the National Association of Securities

Courtesy Steve Madden (2).

Dealers refused to list SHOO unless Belfort—then under investigation for securities fraud—dramatically reduced his stake. As Belfort testified, he agreed to sell his shares to a corporation controlled by Madden to placate the NASD, but it was a bogus transaction. "Under the secret deal which we had written down and legally signed," says Belfort, he was the true owner.

Belfort exerted an extraordinary influence over the company. Stratton's auditor, who was a friend of Belfort's, also became Madden's auditor. In 1994, after Belfort was kicked out of the securities industry, he even joined SHOO as a consultant. In addition, according to Porush's testimony, key Madden employees were given stock in Stratton IPOs as part of their compensation. (A Madden spokesperson denies such an arrangement existed.) As Porush explained, "Part of the package when we recruited people for Steve Madden was . . . because you're in with us, you'll make money on every new issue."

In 1997, the Belfort-Madden friendship ended abruptly around the time Belfort asked Madden to sell some of the SHOO stock he secretly owned. Madden refused, and the dispute quickly turned into a bitter lawsuit, during which Belfort produced the deal they had signed. Madden admitted the signature was his but insisted he had been "manipulated" and "tricked" into signing by someone he had "trusted as my friend, business associate, underwriter, and confidant." According to Madden, the demise of the friendship actually preceded the lawsuit, "when Belfort started showing up stoned for work."

"I have no intention of allowing Jordan Belfort to ruin SML's bright future by threatening me or by tarnishing the company's reputation," Madden vowed at the time. Ultimately, he settled the suit for $4.3 million in cash, an outcome that favored his adversary.

In the fall of 1999, around the time the government went public with the news that Porush and Belfort had been secretly cooperating, the U.S. Attorney's Office approached Madden's personal attorney, Joel Winograd, to discuss its case against his client. Soon, rumors that Madden might be indicted began wending their way around Wall Street.

WHEN MADDEN WAS FINALLY INDICTED LAST June, people who knew him from high school began flooding into Jildor to discuss the charges. "I would tell them, 'That's what they have lawyers for,' " says Jildor senior vice-president Larry Bienenfeld. "I would say that if he was diagnosed with cancer, that's a problem. This is something that can be fixed."

If the first (and, so far, the only) trial to come out of the Stratton investigation is any guide, the charges against Madden may be difficult to prove beyond a reasonable doubt. That trial—of the firm's former auditor, Dennis Gaito—resulted in a hung jury in December after Gaito's attorney, Ronald Fischetti, focused his efforts on destroying the credibility of Porush and Belfort. "As long as Porush and Belfort say what the government wants them to say, they have a free ride," says Fischetti. "No one is checking to determine what happened to those millions and millions that they stashed away."

Joel Winograd seems likely to pursue a similar strategy. A heavyset, white-haired Long Islander who has known Madden for fifteen years, Winograd delights in deriding Porush and Belfort as "devils in business suits."

"Even when he was tape-recording for the government," Winograd says of Belfort, "he would write notes on his hand to betray the government: 'Don't talk, I'm recording you.' Is this the sort of person the government wants to use as a witness in the important aspects of another person's life?"

Belfort, Winograd continues, "even cheats at golf." Madden, by contrast, is not only a "great golfer" but a "good guy," a "straight shooter" who "treats his mother like a queen." Madden, says Winograd, is "being used by Jordan and Danny as one of the keys to open their jail cells that they should be in."

As Winograd sees it, the fact that Madden had an account at Stratton doesn't mean he knew what Porush and Belfort were doing, let alone that he was in any way involved. Madden "was buying stock and making money, buying stock and losing money. He made more than he lost, but he didn't know what improprieties they were involved in."

As Madden himself put it in the course of his lawsuit with Jordan Belfort: "My strengths as a businessman lie in the design and sale of women's shoes, and I have never been comfortable with complicated or technical legal or business documents . . . I have always relied on the people around me."

When I ask why Madden employed Belfort as a consultant at Steve Madden Limited in 1994, after he was barred from the securities industry, Winograd replies, "Steve Madden is a loyal friend and a devoted human being. He didn't turn his back on Jordan Belfort in his time of need." And what about the $80,000 cash kickback Madden allegedly gave to a Stratton golf buddy in the locker room of the Engineers Country Club in Roslyn, Long Island? "It's totally ridiculous," says Winograd. "Cash? The government can explain from here to kingdom come. There is no way Steve would have had that amount of cash, and he wouldn't have had that in a bag walking around a country club. I think these fellows have watched too many spy thrillers.

"Let's say Steve was fooled," Winograd summarizes. "You can be savvy in business, but you may not be savvy in love and friendship."

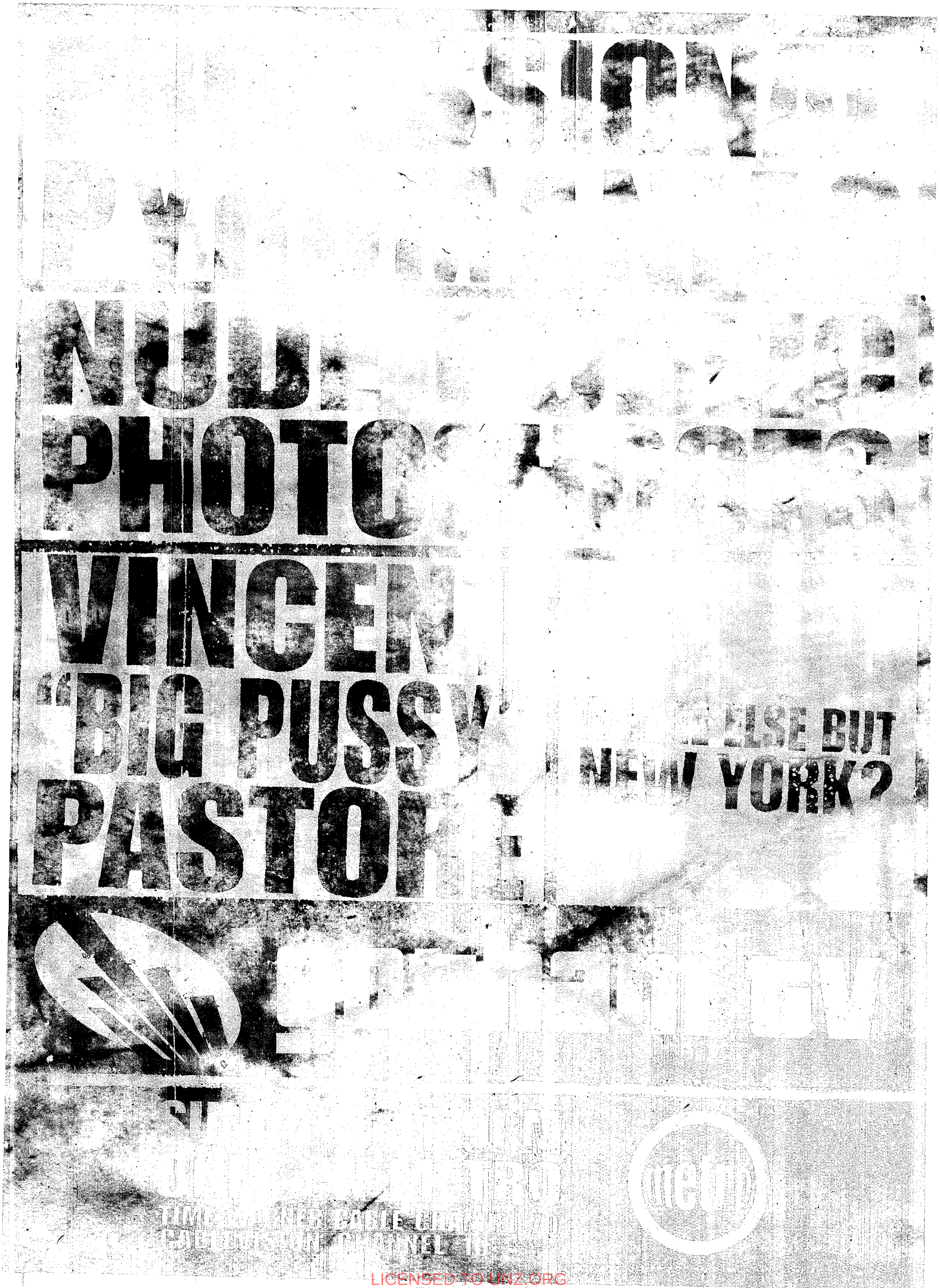
In any case, "Steve will overcome," he vows. "His company will continue to have record quarters of sales and earnings, and this will have a fairy-tale ending."

Perhaps. But even if Madden is acquitted in both of his criminal trials, he could still lose the civil case and, possibly, control of his company. For Steve Madden Limited, such an outcome might be manageable. "Mr. Madden is extremely talented and a tremendous business partner, and he's wonderful," says the company's president, Rhonda Brown. "But we could continue to grow our business profitably . . . whether he's on the golf course, or whatever." For Steve Madden the man, it could be devastating. "My life," he says, "is my company."

IT'S A COLD, GRAY SATURDAY IN SOHO, BUT inside his lower-Broadway flagship boutique, Madden is absorbing teen consumer culture. Hip-hop is blaring on the sound system; girls in black leather jackets and jeans are lining up three-deep at the steel shoe displays. Madden kisses me hello, and with his arms folded across his chest proclaims: "*This* is a regular Saturday." Madden roams the deep, narrow selling floor, shoving his hand into insteps, caressing soles, and obsessing over the most minor details of the handiwork.

"I love that boot," he intones to a young dark-haired woman trying on narrow-toed black *faux*-crocodile boots with a two-inch platform heel. "Where else could you ever get anything like this?" he asks. "Where could you ever see anything like this?"

"I built all this," he tells me, waving his arm at the expanse of his crowded boutique. "And they . . . " he says, referring to Porush and Belfort. But he trails off without completing his sentence. "It's Russian," he says, finally. "Like Dostoyevsky." ■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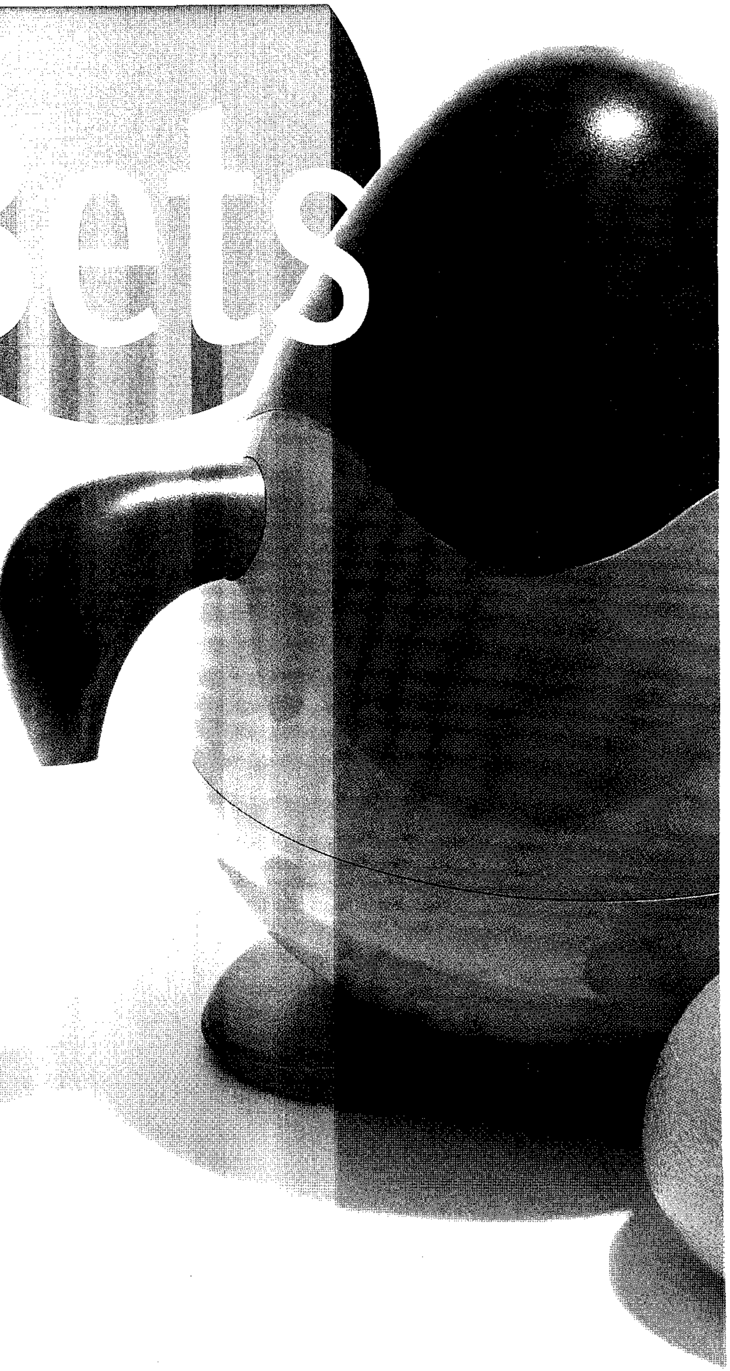
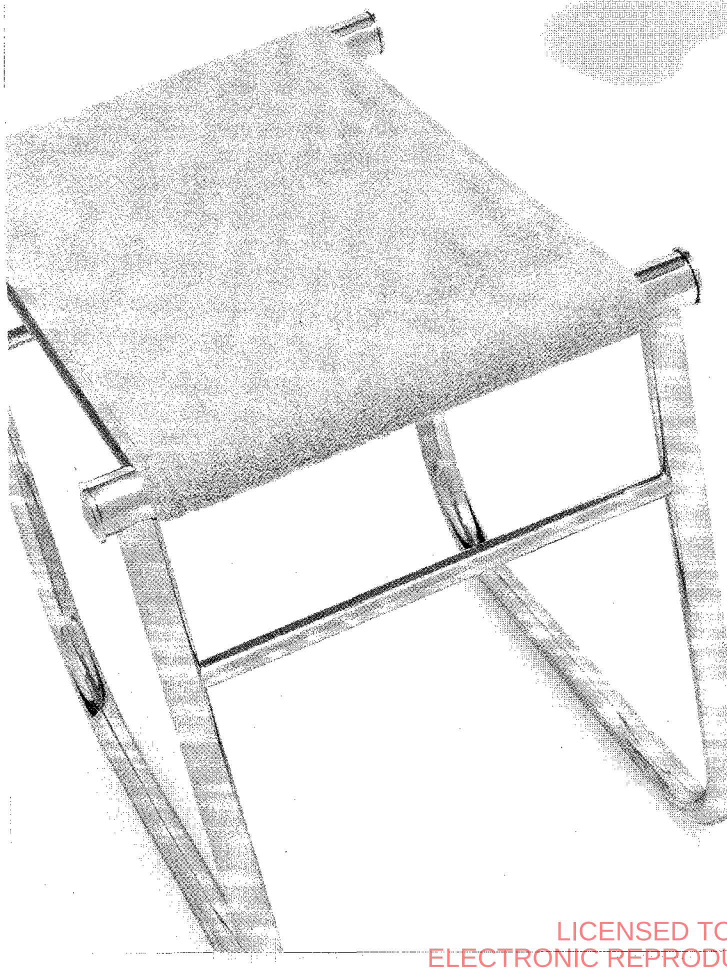


RIMA SUQI

Squeeze Play You half expect L'Equip's new juicer—which looks part robot, part penguin—to walk and talk. It doesn't. But it does make orange, grapefruit, lemon, or lime juice in a flash and will pour two cups of said juice at the same time. Each arm has a spout—if both arms are down, juice will pour from both. Leave one arm up for a single cup, or a friendly wave ($130).

► **S. FELDMAN HOUSEWARES**
1304 Madison Avenue, near 92nd Street/212-289-7367



Chrome Fixture If only *we* could look this good at the age of 73. Corbusier's LC9 bath stool has been in continuous production since 1928, yet it seems quite up-to-date in 2001. And, at $295, it's a bargain compared with other pieces in Cassina's Masters Collection. Each chrome stool is signed and numbered, and features a terrycloth seat.

► **CASSINA**
155 East 56th Street/212-245-2121

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAMES WORRELL

Groove Things

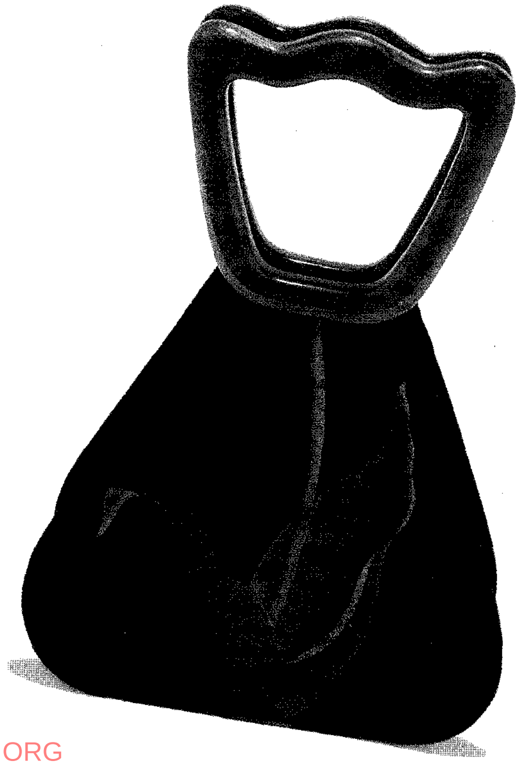
There should be a warning label on these tiles: PROLONGED STARING CAN CAUSE MOTION SICKNESS. The eight-inch-square glass tiles were first made in the seventies in Czechoslovakia, where they lay unused until recently. "You can use them for anything but the floor," warns Matthew Austin at Las Venus, where the tiles are sold in six different designs ($10–$12).

▶ **LAS VENUS**
163 Ludlow Street/212-982-0608
113 Stanton Street/212-358-8000

Ear Candy

John Hardy is obsessed with gadgets. If it's new, cool, and techy, he'll buy it. But the Bali-based designer couldn't find an earphone chic enough to go with any of his cell phones; so he made his own. He calls them "candy for the ears"—sterling-silver cell-phone earphones, some with semiprecious stones. While they are guaranteed to draw attention for their design, improved cell-phone reception is unfortunately not part of the package ($195 for silver; $950–$1,100 with stones).

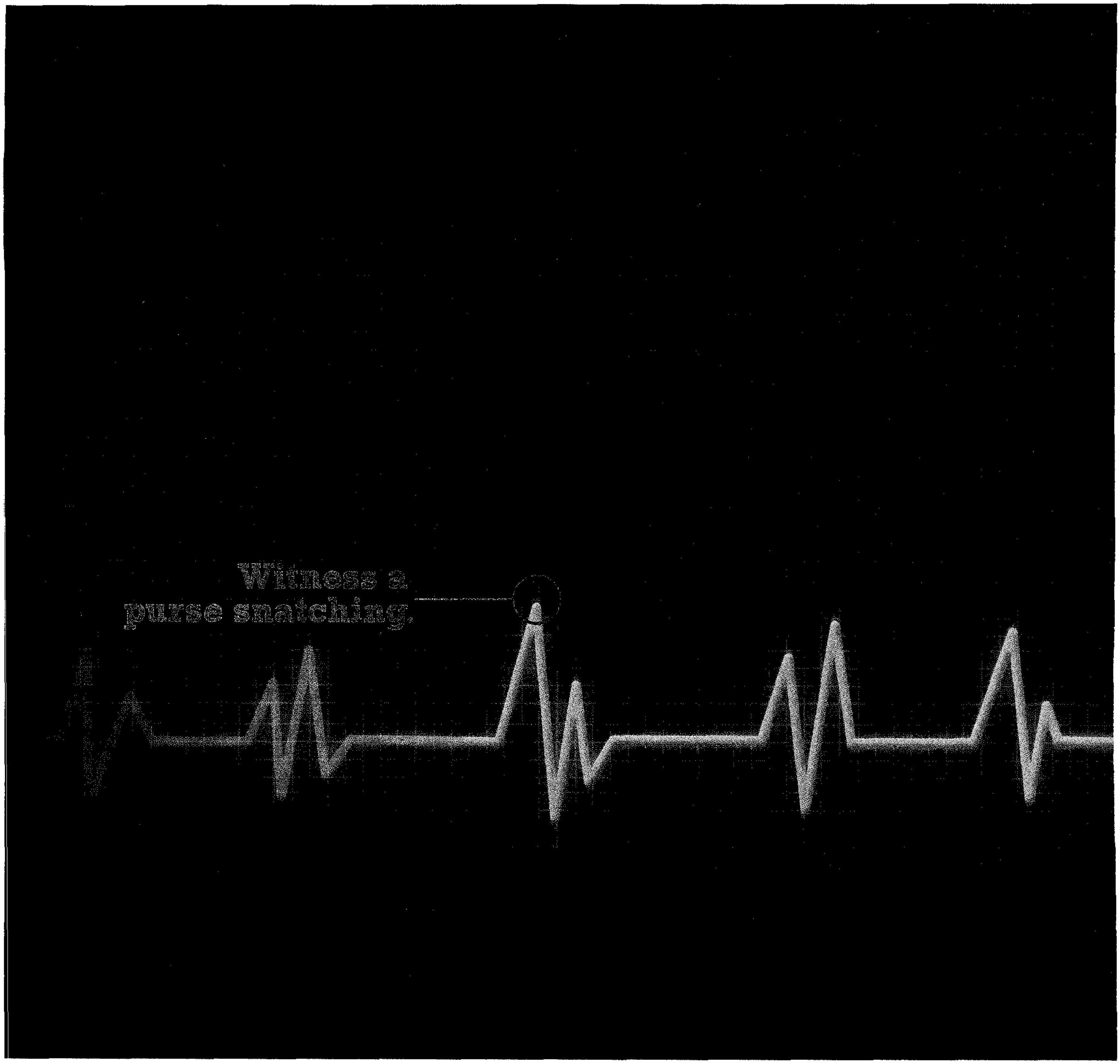
▶ **SAKS FIFTH AVENUE**
611 Fifth Avenue/212-753-4000



Velvet Underground

Would you trust a designer inspired by velvet paintings? Or would blurry visions of Jimi Hendrix keep you away? Not to worry, Jennifer Boyd's painted velvet handbags, which she sells under the name Mona Milkface, are a bit more elegant than your average velvet Elvis. "Tip Toe," shown here, features custom-made Lucite handles (shaped like tulip petals) and the silkscreened image of a stem and leaves ($295).

▶ **BOND 07 BY SELIMA**
7 Bond Street/212-677-8487



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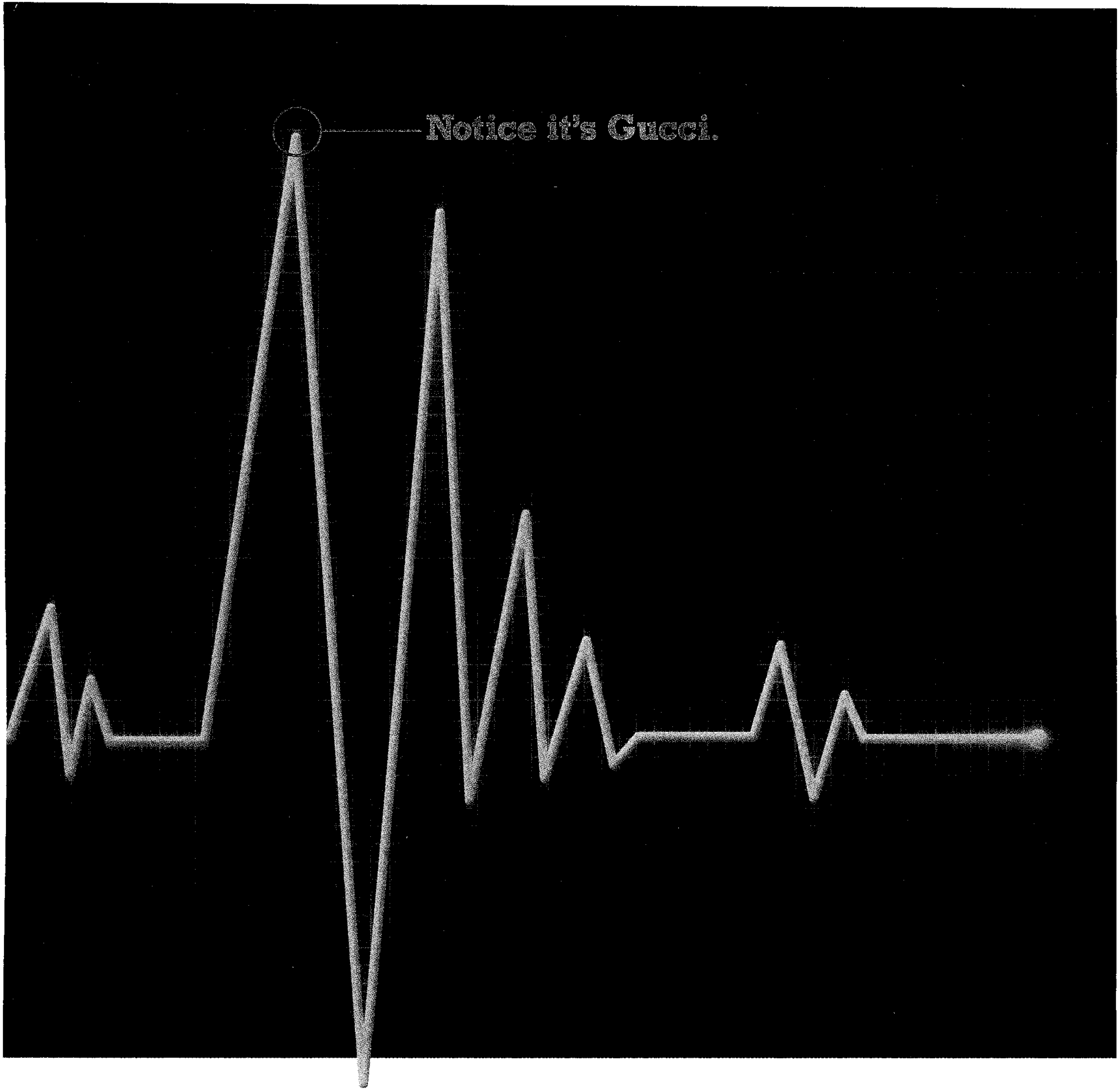
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ROB TURNER

Track Star

Barreling toward Boston at 150 mph, Amtrak's new Acela train delivers a European-style commute to business travelers who value comfort over the raw speed of the shuttle.

WELL, IF YOU ASK me, it's about damn time. Parisians and Londoners have been zipping between their respective cities in high-speed style for years. Tokyoites and Berliners have long been able to duck airport weather delays and lost baggage by turning to the rails as well. Meanwhile, the most exciting regional-travel innovation to hit New York in a decade has been the fact that you can now catch *Me, Myself and Irene* on Peter Pan's 5 P.M. motorcoach to Beantown.

So when I heard that Amtrak had finally launched its high-speed Acela Express service between New York and Boston (and D.C., too), I couldn't wait to take it for a test run. While I've taken the train to Boston before, the nearly five-hour travel time can be torturous. As a result, I normally take the ultraconvenient Delta Shuttle even though, like several travelers I've run into, I am not all that crazy about flying to begin with.

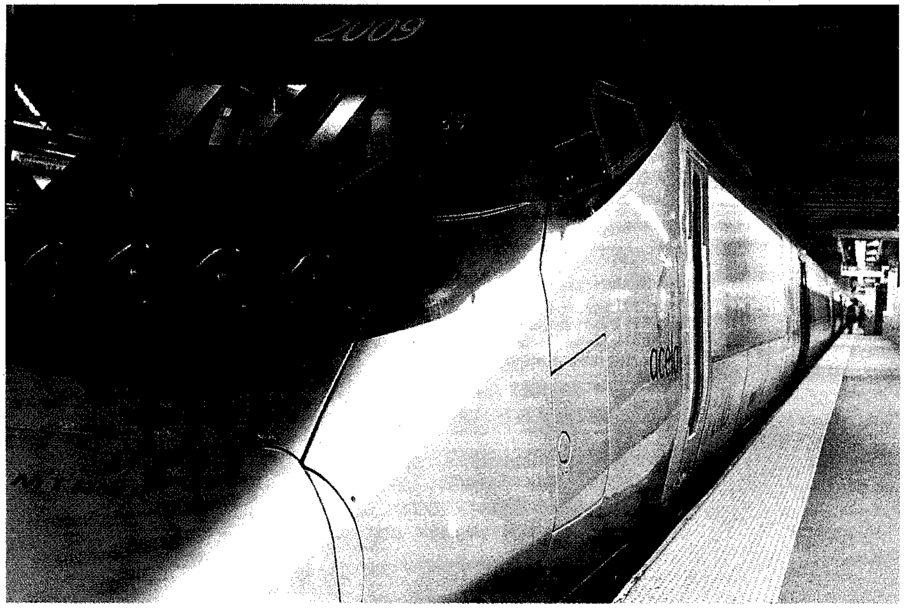
For this test I flew up in the morning on Delta and returned on the Acela Express. For the purpose of comparison, I traveled during rush hour on both trips, and because Acela Express bills itself as the choice for "discriminating travelers," offering only business and first-class options, I traveled first-class to see if the amenities helped outweigh the extra travel time.

Taking the Jet Out of Jetsetting

With Amtrak fighting for its financial life (the government will soon stop subsidizing it), the train king is going all-out to lure travelers away from its winged competitors. And the airlines are fighting back. Last summer, for example, Delta upgraded all its shuttle planes from old Boeing 727's to new 737-800's, which have plenty of leg room. Their airport lounge is also a big selling point for Delta. As you walk in, you have nearly 100 free magazines and newspapers to choose from (being a magazine junkie, I usually bring an extra bag). The lounge has two Bloomberg machines, a business center (with conference rooms, faxes, etc.), and complimentary coffee and juice until 10:30 A.M.

Since the Acela can't beat the competition on pure speed, it tries harder to please. Its first-class service not only offers a special club lounge (the one in Boston deserves a spread in *Wallpaper*) but also includes unlimited drinks on the train (everything from iced lattes to single-malt scotches) and a full meal, served with real metal forks and real plates, that beat the hell out of the hard raisin bagel with light cream cheese that I got on the shuttle.

After a snack of nuts served in a small ceramic bowl, we were brought hot towels for our hands, and then dinner, which turned out to be better than any airplane food I've ever had. It began with duck confit over a mesclun salad as an appetizer, and for the main course I selected the pan-seared peppered fillet of salmon served over corkscrew pasta with an aïoli cream sauce. Dessert was "opera cake" and coffee. The three businessmen sitting around the table in the dining car were equally impressed with the food. In fact, all three of these guys, each with a cell phone in front of him, happily sang the praises of the train. Most of all, they loved the fact that they could use their phones the entire trip. Then there are the power outlets at every seat to run your computer (some passengers were watching DVD movies on theirs)



Photographs by Eric McNatt.

Plane Sight

At left, the Acela train in Penn Station; above, the Delta Shuttle to Boston.

or charge your phone; the bathrooms are huge; and the café car has draft beer and TVs with CNN.

Go, Speed Racer, Go!

The biggest selling point of the new Acela Express, of course, is that it cuts about 45 minutes from the old time by reaching speeds as high as 150 mph. The conductor actually makes an announcement when the train reaches top speed. While the plane itself is obviously faster (45 minutes of actual flying time versus 3 hours and 28 minutes of rail time), in my case I actually saved only about an hour by flying because of all the time spent commuting to the airport, boarding the plane, and waiting on the runway. A cab to the airport took 30 minutes, whereas the subway to my apartment from Penn Station took 15. I also had to get to the airport early, because there are no seat assignments (unlike with the Acela's first-class service), and I didn't want to have to schlep to the back of the plane, praying for an empty overhead bin, as a late-arriving (and seemingly frustrated) Susan Sarandon was forced to do.

And while my train was actually stopped for a few minutes due to a "police matter" on the tracks ahead of us (and what New Yorker's not used to that?), trains are rarely delayed by weather the way planes often are. One 29-year-old salesman on the Acela told me he was taking the train because the last time he took the shuttle, the plane circled La Guardia for an hour before landing. A fellow Delta passenger complained about a recent flight that had been canceled because of snow, resulting in his having to take a bus back to New York. In fact, last month La Guardia was named the worst airport in the country for weather- and congestion-related delays. The skies were clear on the day I flew, but soon after we boarded, the captain announced that there were fifteen planes ahead of us, and so we'd be on the ground for another twenty minutes (audible groans followed). Another bonus for trains: While airlines thread all passengers through a single exit, trains have two doors per car, making embarking and disembarking much easier.

Time Is Money

Of the two trips I took (the shuttle up and the train back) the plane was a little more expensive. My last-minute ticket on the Delta Shuttle was $202 one-way, and a one-way first-class ticket on the Acela Express costs $187. But because I took a $35 car service to La Guardia, and because Boston cabdrivers charge fare, toll, tip, and an "airport fee," flying relieved me of about $250 total, compared with about $200 for the train, since the short subway ride from Penn Station to my Upper West Side apartment set me back only $1.50. (The New York–Washington one-way trip, incidentally, costs $217 first-class and $143 business-class.)

You can get away with paying less if you book ahead on the shuttle or travel by business-class on the Acela. For the shuttle, they quoted me a price of $105 one-way with a seven-day advance purchase, $89 with a fourteen-day advance purchase. There are no discounts for buying in advance on the Acela, but business-class travelers pay only $120 each way.

Convenience Counts

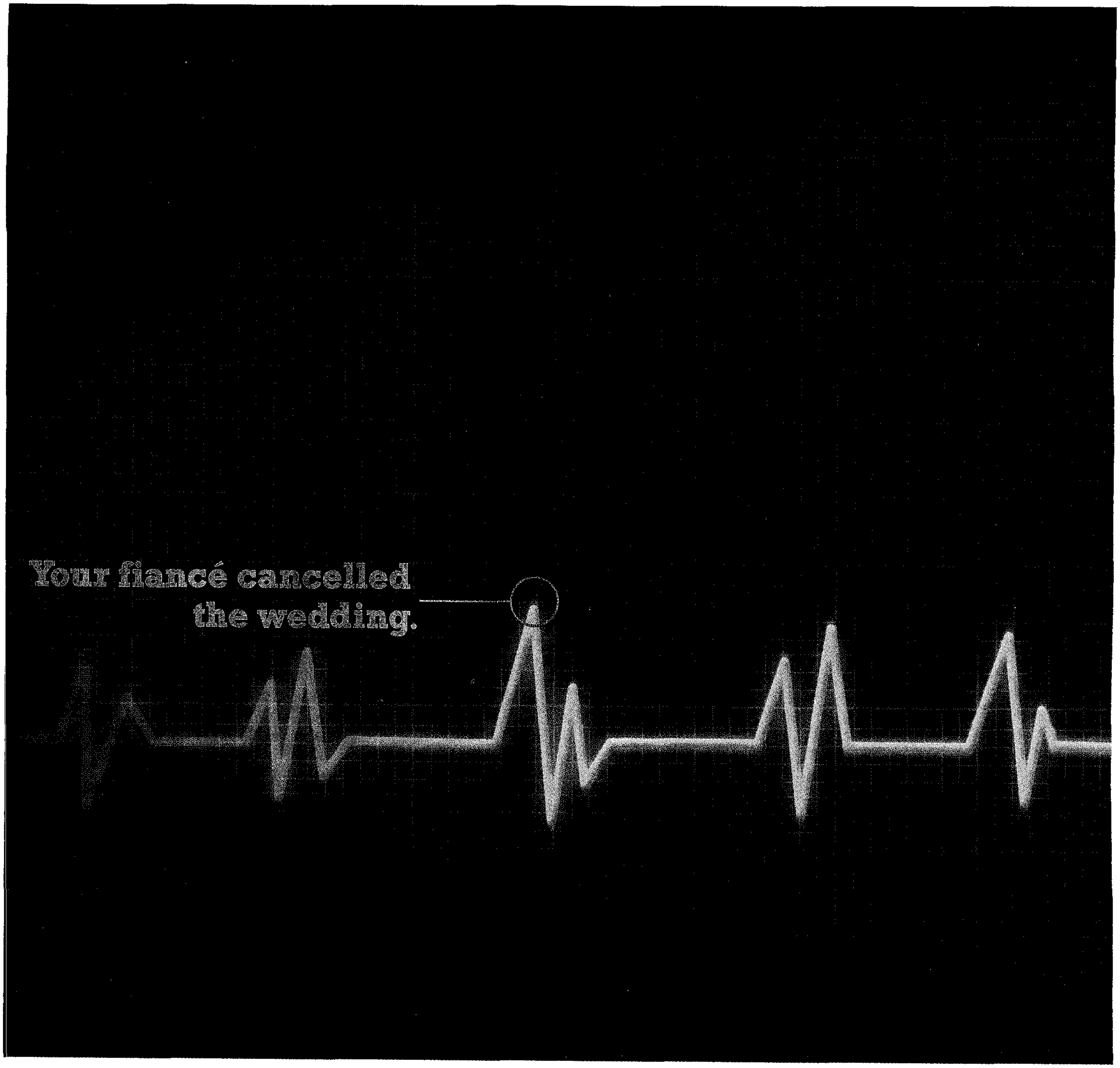
For now, the Delta Shuttle beats the Acela in the frequency-of-departure department hands-down. It departs every hour on the half-hour from 6:30 A.M. to 9:30 P.M. Missed your flight? Simply hop on the next one. The Acela Express, on the other hand, currently has only one trip a day from New York to Washington and Boston, respectively. The Boston leg leaves Penn Station at 8:03 A.M. and returns at 5:12 P.M. But Amtrak will add one more daily train to each city on March 5 and expects to offer hourly departures this fall. It also expects to shorten the travel time to three hours and five minutes over the next few years.

In years past, anyone who yearned for the fun and romance of train travel had to sacrifice a great deal in time and comfort. And while the Acela may not be the Orient Express, looking ahead it's very hard for me to imagine, especially during bad weather, not opting for the train. Sure, I'll still yearn for the free magazines, but I definitely won't miss that bagel. ■

Expert Testimony

The Inside Story

Has the cold weather turned your apartment into a round-the-clock romper room? When the very sight of Tonka trucks and Franklin the Turtle is too much to bear, strap on the Wellies and let a professional do the entertaining. Chris Raschka—a Caldecott Honor–winning children's-book illustrator, collaborator on the critically acclaimed book *Fishing in the Air*, and fellow urban parent—takes his 5½-year-old son to book readings at the **Drawing Center** (35 Wooster Street; 212-219-2166), a SoHo art gallery. "It's a nice, big space where kids get to interact with art, puppets, and objects," Raschka says. Admission is free (but the schedule varies, so make sure you call ahead) and the author-led readings mix in performance and visuals to ensure that the kids enjoy the readings at least as much as the latest VeggieTales video. JEREMY KUHN



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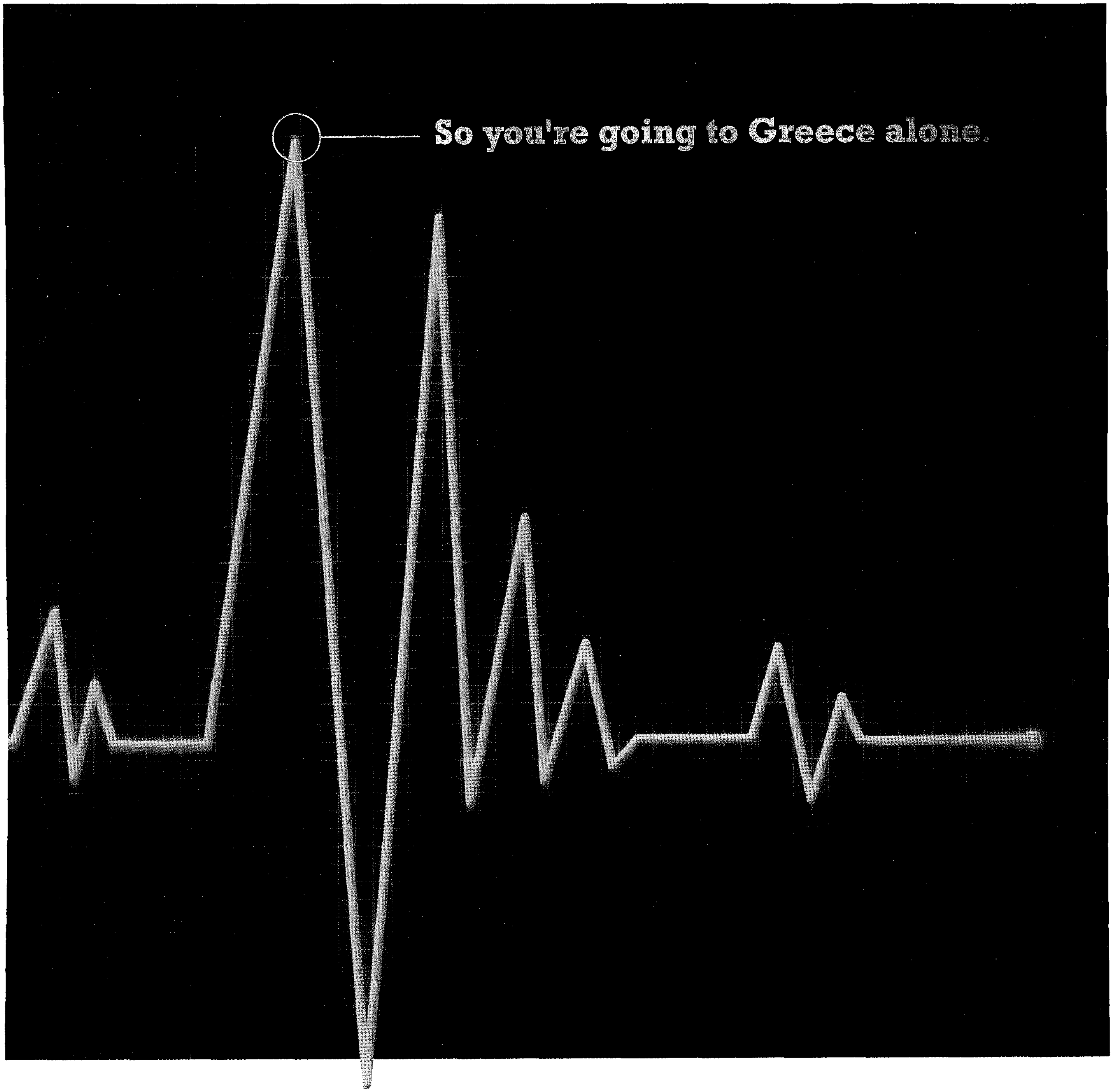
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Sales & Bargains

TARA PEPPER

Floral Delivery

This spring's flower-power prints will warm your heart—and the rest of you—and you don't have to wait till April to wear them.

YOUR TOES ARE STILL RECOVERING from the whole strappy-sandals-in-the-snow craze, and now the burst of floral prints on the runways from Cacharel and Versace is proving irresistible despite subzero temperatures. But are there flowery spring clothes that aren't so fragile and skimpy that you'd have to blow your savings on a Caribbean vacation in order to wear them now?

Express combines two up-to-the-minute looks with its soft jeans jacket printed with big, washed-out pink-and-white daisies ($78). We also love Express's jeans emblazoned with dark-pink and yellow roses and just the tiniest hint of glitter ($78). **XOXO**'s pink-rose top "looks just like Ungaro," a fellow bargain hunter confided ($32 at Bloomingdale's). Just don't wear all three at once.

Benetton's pretty miniskirt, printed with sky-blue and fuchsia flowers, is designed for the skinny few ($34). But if you don't quite buy the articles telling us we can all join in the new miniskirt trend, the store's longer floral skirt is lovely too, sprinkled with olive-and-purple wildflowers ($68). **Franchi**'s bag is a flashback to the raffia tote you had when you were little, updated into a chic clutch ($85 from Bloomingdale's).

So you swore off pink when you were 4? The soft-blue roses on **H&M**'s white cotton capris are a more grown-up look ($25). If you need a tailored style, its wine-colored cowboy shirt dotted with tiny green flowers is fitted and has a hint of seventies piping ($19). Our favorite: splurgeworthy tapered pants from **BCBG Max Azria** with sharp purple and red leaves. You'll be wearing them until the return of beach weather ($146).

Bloomingdale's, 1000 Third Ave., at 59th St. (212-705-2000); United Colors of Benetton, 597 Fifth Ave., near 48th St. (212-593-0290); H&M, 640 Fifth Ave., at 51st St. (212-489-0309); Express (for locations, visit www.expressfashion.com).

Picks of the Week

Chanel Fine Jewelry is offering one-of-a-kind statement pieces at reduced prices. The sale includes the Clover brooch, with a 39-carat emerald-cut aquamarine set in white gold. *15 E. 57th St. (212-715-4705); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.-Wed. 10-6, Thurs. 10-7, Fri.-Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; 2/23-3/5.*

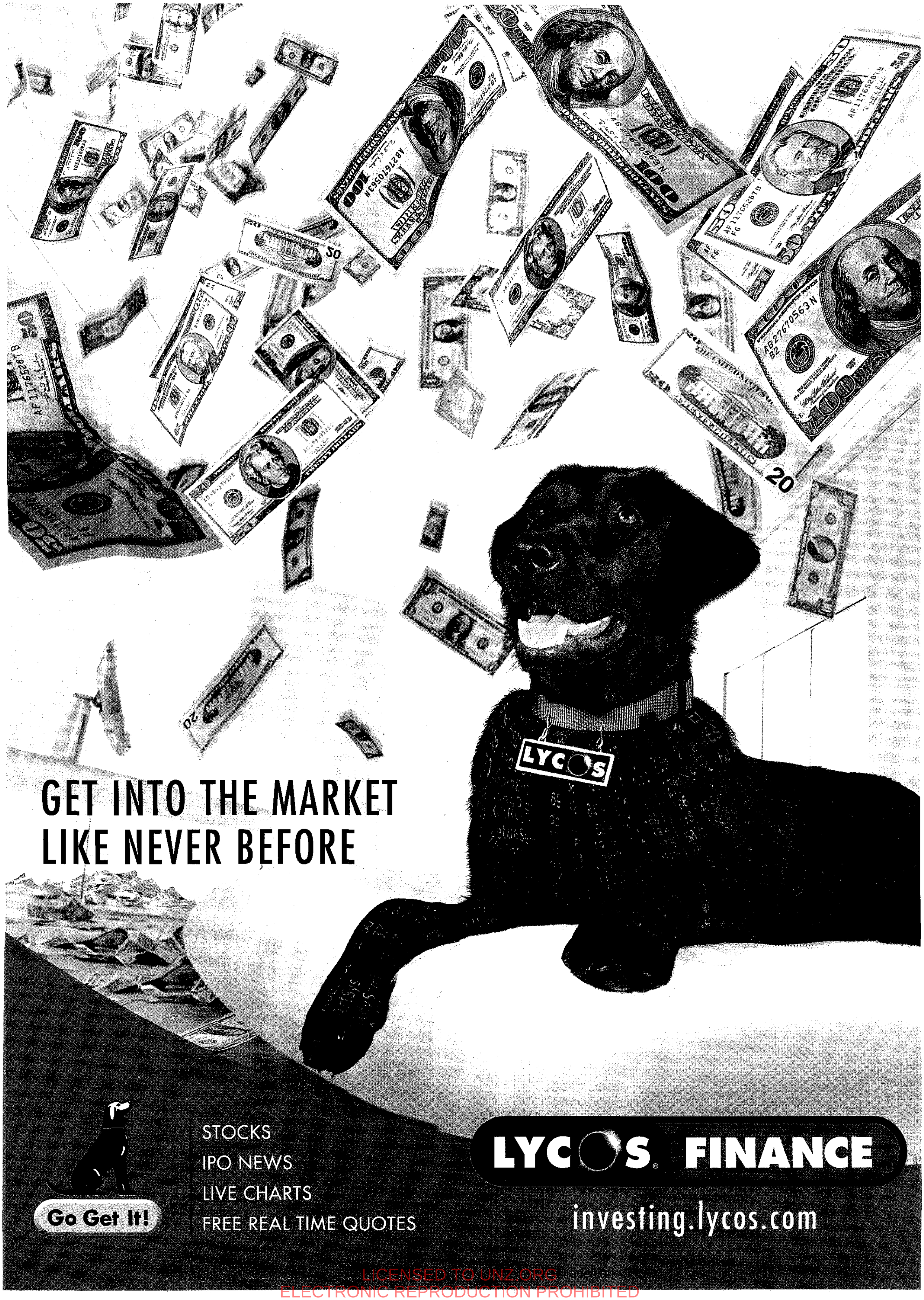
Gracie Square Hospital is having a women's-shoe sale to raise funds for its Patient Aid Program, with reduced prices on designers including Kenneth Cole, Nine West, and BCBG. *420 E. 76th St. (212-434-5793); A.E., M.C., V.; 8-5; 2/20.*

Metromom is reducing its classic fall styles in all sizes. Stretch-wool jackets are now $99; pants are $79. Long-sleeve stretch-cotton shirts are $50, and wool dresses are $119. *340 E. 57th St. (914-582-0180); A.E., M.C., V.; Thurs. 8-8; 2/22.*

Beyond the Bosphorus is marking down handwoven Turkish kilims and other gifts from around the world by about 50 percent. Kilims (three-foot-by-four-foot) are $75; pillows are reduced to $25–$150. Turkish bolsters are now $50, and runners in various colors and patterns are priced between $220 and $1,000. *79 Sullivan St. (212-219-8257); A.E., M.C., V.; Tue.-Sun. 12-7:30; through 3/5.* ■

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Shyama Patel, New York Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022-6999, four weeks before the sale. Sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be given preference.

Photographs by Cathy Crawford.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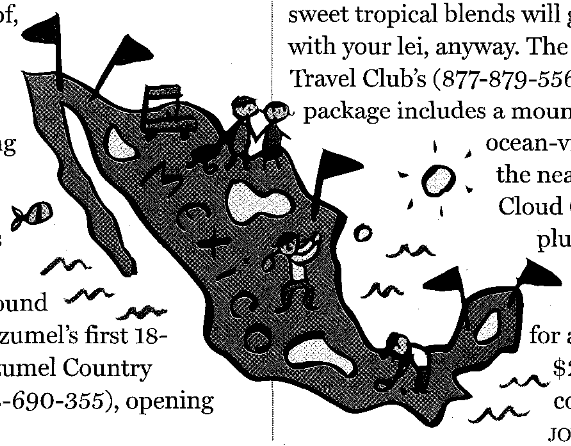
Travel

TARA MANDY

Olé-in-One

You may not know how to yell "fore" in Spanish yet, but Larry Olmsted, managing editor of golf-industry newsletter *The Golf Insider* (thegolfinsider.com), says Mexico is "the up-and-coming international golf destination of the year." Given that they have 150 courses already in place and another 30 under way, we think he's right. Los Cabos is the country's hottest spot, with several Jack Nicklaus–designed courses, including the new Four Seasons Punta Mita (800-332-3442), Cabo del Sol (011-52-114-331-49), El Dorado (011-52-114-400-40), and nine brand-new ocean holes at Palmilla (011-52-114-885-25). Nicklaus is also designing 18 of the 36 holes at Puerto Vallarta's Vista Vallarta (011-52-322-105-45), scheduled to open April 1; the other 18, by Tom Weiskopf, are due in September. The country's east coast is sprouting its fair share of greens, too, with ten courses currently under construction around Cancun, and Cozumel's first 18-hole course, Cozumel Country Club (011-52-98-690-355), opening June 1.



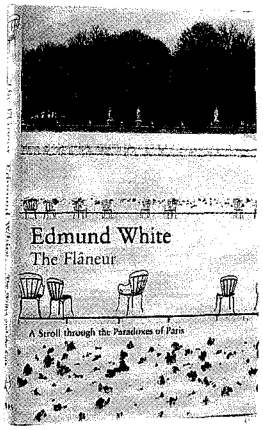
Hawaii Wine-O

On your next trip to Hawaii, consider skipping Waikiki's beaches in favor of the vineyards in Upcountry Maui. That's right, there's a wine country beyond those palm trees and volcanoes. At Maui's Kahului Airport, rent an SUV and trek nearly 2,500 feet above sea level to Tedeschi Vineyards, where travelers can sip whites, reds, and rosés made from locally grown pineapples and Carnelian grapes. This isn't Château Pétrus, of course—bottles range from $7.95 for Maui Splash! to $16.95 for Plantation Red—but the sweet tropical blends will go better with your lei, anyway. The Hawaiian Travel Club's (877-879-5566) seven-day package includes a mountain- or ocean-view suite at the nearby Silver Cloud Guest Ranch, plus car rental and flights from JFK, for around $2,500 per couple.

JOY ARMSTRONG

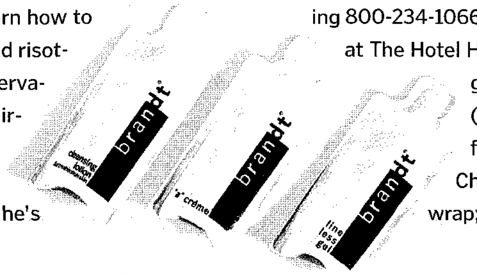
Insider Trips

Edmund White's *The Flâneur: A Stroll Through the Paradoxes of Paris* is the first installment in a new travel-book series called "The Writer and the City," from Bloomsbury Press. The novelist lived in Paris for sixteen years, and his opinionated account is meant to supplement traditional Paris guidebooks by providing a personal take on the city's social and political history, along with helpful bits of literary and linguistic lore. So what is White's favorite insider tip? Check out the Musée Nissim de Camondo, an eighteenth-century-decorative-arts museum that he likens to New York's Frick. *The Flâneur* hits stores in March; and the next installment will be Australian novelist Peter Carey's take on Sydney, which is due in September.

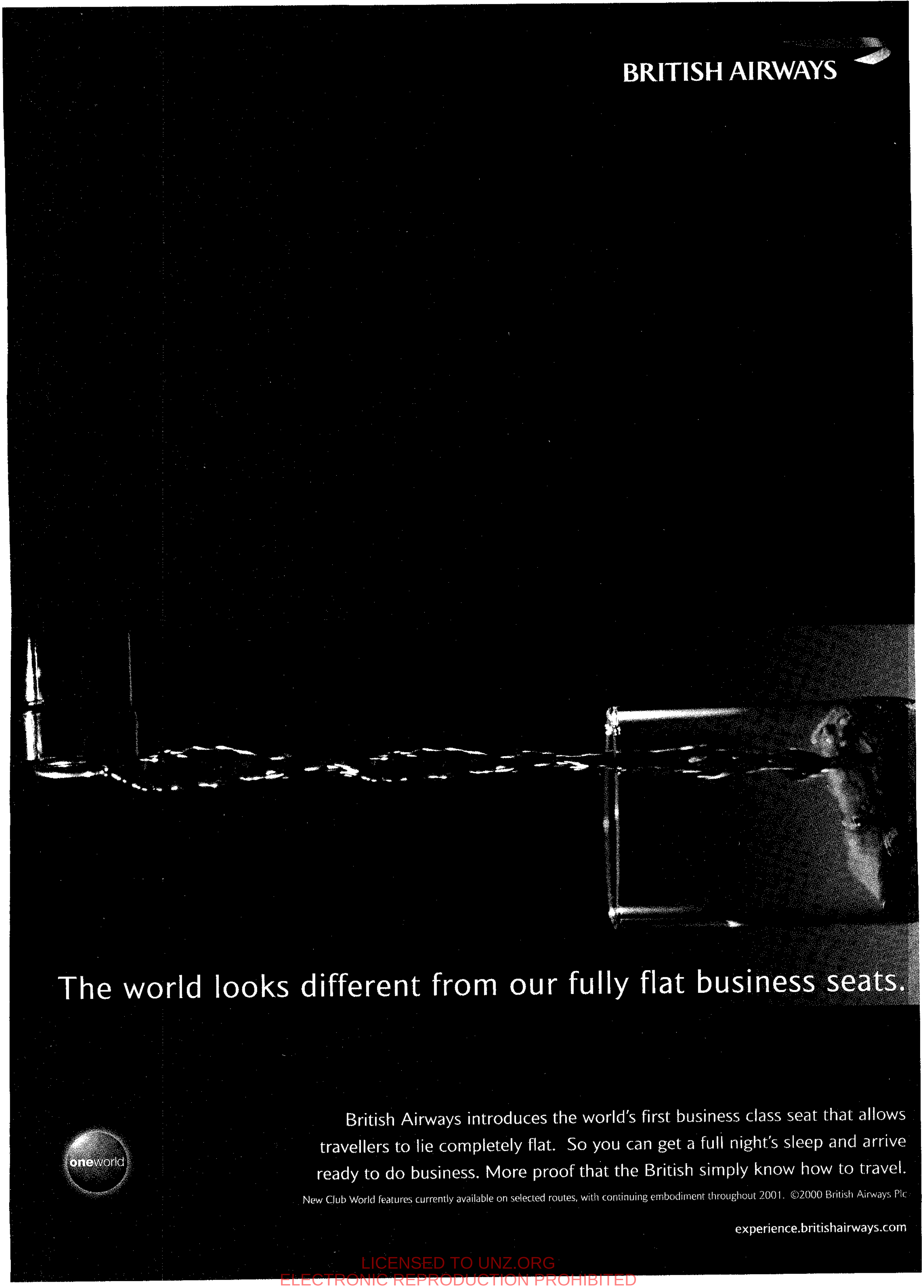


etc.

COOKING SHUL This spring, Inland Services Inc. is offering weeklong kosher-cooking classes in Provence (March 12–19) and Tuscany (May 7–14) for aspiring cooks who want to learn how to prepare dishes like terrine de tomates and risotto under rabbinical supervision. For reservations, call 212-687-9898; $2,700 plus airfare. • **SMALL PACKAGES** Famed dermatologist Dr. Fred Brandt understands his clients' desire for portable products, so he's developed Brandt to Go, a travel line of packable nylon packets that includes 30 of his most popular beauty potions, like Lineless Gel and Cleansing Lotion. Available at Bergdorf and Sephora, or by calling 800-234-1066. • **HERSHEY'S FULL-BODY KISS** The new Spa at The Hotel Hershey in Pennsylvania pampers guests with gooey services like a Whipped Cocoa Bath (that's a 25-minute soak in a whirlpool tub filled with milk and chocolate; $45) or the Chocolate Fondue Wrap (a chocolate-laced mud wrap; $90). For more information, call 800-HERSHEY.



Photographs: clockwise from top, Larry Gilbert/IMPACT; Peter Meretsky (2). Illustration by Isabelle Dervaux.



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A Weekly Guide to Culture and Upcoming Events

Edited by Christopher Bonanos

Movies

Last Resort

Opens February 23

The touching story of a Russian woman and her son, exiled to an English refugee camp, was the hit of last year's Venice Film Festival, and director Pawel Pawlikowski has already picked up a couple of international film awards. (See Peter Rainer's review, page 62.)

Theater

See Bob Run

At the Red Room Theater

Bob's a woman, as it happens, and she's played by Susan O'Connor, whom we loved in playwright Daniel MacIvor's *Never Swim Alone*. In MacIvor's new drama, she's hitching her way cross-country, spinning yarns that may or may not be her own story. (See listing, page 81.)

Art

The Art Show

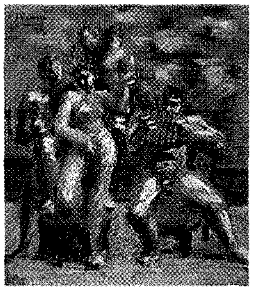
February 22–26

The Armory Show

February 23–26

Best of the Week

Each of these shows is big enough that buyers would come to town for just one—and together, they're mandatory attendance. Never mind that the Art Show, and not the Armory Show, is held at the Seventh Regiment Armory; the Armory Show is at Piers 88 and 90.



(Pictured, Picasso's *Jeune Homme au Miroir, Nu, Joueur de Flute de Pan, Enfant*, 1923, for sale at the Art Show; call 212-940-8925 for details. The Armory Show, 212-645-6440.)

Restaurants

Guastavino's

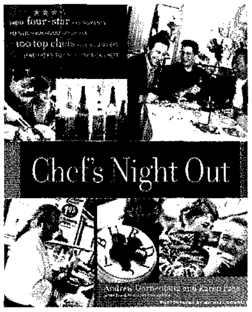
Mardi Gras Specials

Two ideas for Fat Tuesday: At the upstairs Club Guastavino, a full seven-course Louisiana prix fixe (oysters, veal Oscar, pralines, much more). And on the regular restaurant menu, specials include blackened snapper, duck-sausage gumbo, and a host of elaborate drinks. The management requests that you desist from bead-throwing. (Call 212-980-2455 to reserve.)

Books

Chef's Night Out

By Andrew Dornenburg and Karen Page; Wiley; $29.95



There is no more pervasive foodie urge than to know a fabulous restaurant that only true devotees have discovered. And who better to guide you there than a great chef? In *Chef's Night Out*, top restaurateurs coast-to-coast reveal their secret favorites. Sample: Jean-Georges Vongerichten eats at Pho Bang, the Vietnamese soup shop on Mott Street.

Nightlife

Tibet House Benefit Concert

Carnegie Hall, February 26

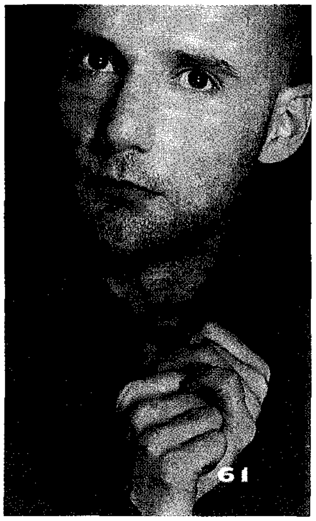
Robert Thurman runs Tibet House, so, needless to say, you can count on daughter Uma and son-in-law Ethan's attendance. But they're just the tip of the celebrity Himalaya expected at this, the eleventh annual Tibet House benefit. Performers include David Bowie, Moby (pictured), Emmylou Harris, Philip Glass, and many more. (Tickets are $30 to $80; call 212-247-7800.)

Kids

Revenge of the Space Pandas

At the Atlantic Theater Company

David Mamet for tykes? Don't laugh: The playwright's trademark mean streak is absent from this story of two bored midwestern kids who set out on an interplanetary trip—well beyond Glengarry Glen Ross. (See page 105.)

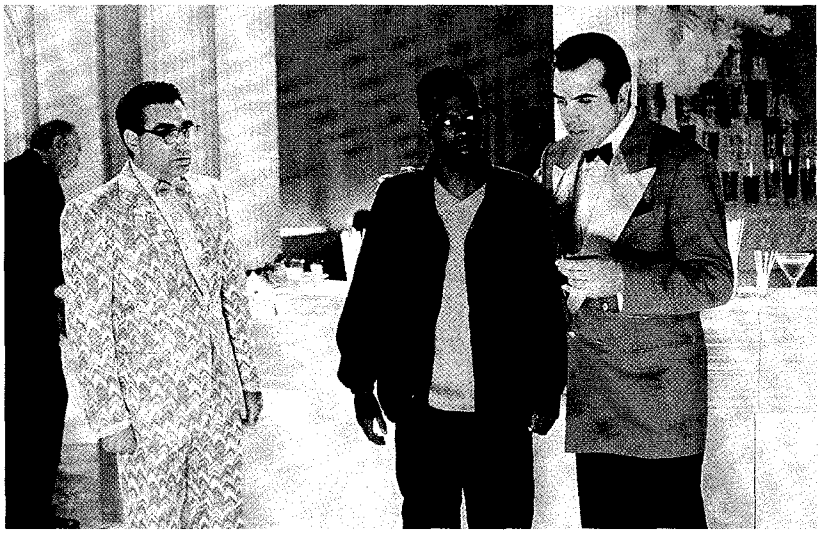


Photographs: clockwise from top left, Joss Barratt; Mei Tao; courtesy of the Art Dealer's Association of America.

No Body But You

Chris Rock in the body of a rich old white guy is a funny idea that *Down to Earth* turns to mush; *Last Resort* nails the single-mother-and-son thing perfectly.

WHY IS IT THAT WHEN brash comics decide they want to be movie stars, they turn themselves into saps? With the possible exception of Jim Carrey, I can't think of one comic actor in recent times who has not chased mainstream success by turning into a vat of Jell-O. You can go back even further: Richard Pryor, to take the most wasteful example, rarely chose the kind of movie roles that captured his stand-up persona; he transformed himself into a family-entertainment huggy-bear. And Robin Williams long ago become a lachrymose joke.



Confidence, man: Eugene Levy, Chris Rock, and Chazz Palminteri in *Down to Earth.*

Chris Rock is the latest casualty of this unfortunate tradition. In **Down to Earth,** he plays Lance Barton, an amateur comedian and bicycle messenger mistakenly whisked to Heaven by an angel (Eugene Levy) before his time. Returned by the head angel (Chazz Palminteri) to earth, Lance is given a new body to inhabit—the just-murdered corpse of Park Avenue billionaire Charles Wellington—until one more suitable can be found. (It's a premise similar to those of *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* and *Heaven Can Wait.*) The gimmick here is that although everyone in the movie sees Lance as a Caucasian geezer, we see him mostly as Chris Rock. This is a passable running joke, but it turns out that Rock is after something edifying. He wants *Down to Earth* to be about Lance's inner self, about how it doesn't matter what we look like on the outside.

A great racial comedy could be made with exactly the opposite premise. If Lance realized that he could act out his most larcenous fantasies by being white and rich, the film might have had an edge. Instead, the dismally maudlin point is that love conquers all. Lance is infatuated with Sontee (Regina King), a black community activist whose spirited opposition to Wellington's fat-cat maneuverings reforms him. Then *she* becomes infatuated. This love interest is creepy: Although we in the audience see Wellington as Rock, Sontee sees him as an old, white, moneyed coot but warms to him anyway—not, of course, because he's fabulously powerful and wealthy but because he has a good heart.

Directors Chris and Paul Weitz, who made *American Pie,* don't do anything untoward with the baked goods this time around. Like Chris Rock, they want to be taken seriously as humanists. How much better *Down to Earth* would have been if everyone involved wanted simply to be taken seriously as a *comedian.* Chris Rock is so intent on sanctifying himself that he undercuts even his purely comic moments. With his blank, fixed stare and flat, impulsive line deliveries, he lacks an actor's resources to pull him through the slop and the tears. He probably thinks that a good heart is all you need. If Rock ever comes to his senses, he can host *Saturday Night Live* and skewer this damp, gag-riddled civics lesson of a movie.

Last Resort IS BECOMINGLY MODEST. IT'S about a Russian woman, Tanya (Dina Korzun), and her 10-year-old son, Artiom (Artiom Strelnikov), and the difficulties they face as exiles in the British seaside community of Stonehaven. Tanya has come to England to marry her fiancé, but he rejects her and she ends up in a bleak holding area with a mass of other refugees. Her attempts to escape are blocked, and with her money running out, she auditions for an Internet-porn operation. The sequence in which she is asked to strip and writhe for the camera is painfully sad; she makes the attempt and then crumples in humiliation. Director Pawel Pawlikowski, a Pole working in England, understands the dissonance of a life lived at odds with one's surroundings. His work here is reminiscent of Ken Loach's, but unlike Loach he doesn't hammer home the social-activist angle. Although *Last Resort* touches on the troubles of refugee camps, it's no manifesto. Tanya is too individualistic to be a centerpiece for poster art. Her gumption for survival is matched by her romanticism;

Down to Earth
Directed by Chris and Paul Weitz; starring Chris Rock, Eugene Levy, and Regina King.

Last Resort
Directed by Pawel Pawlikowski; starring Dina Korzun.

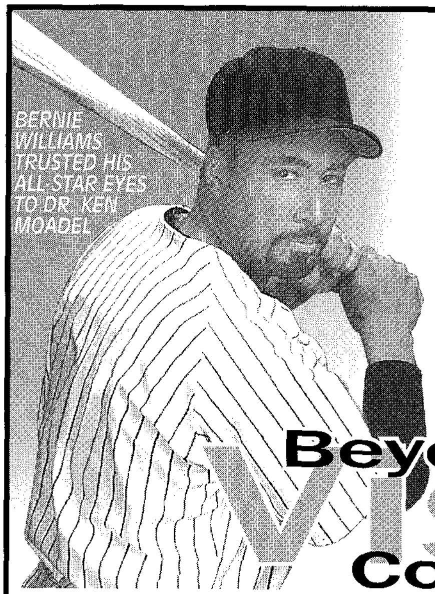
Photograph by Marni Grossman.

she says proudly that she always needs to be in love, and the sentiment is both her downfall and her salvation.

A celebrated actress in Russia, Dina Korzun can look simultaneously bewildered and resolute. When Tanya is wooed by Alfie (Paddy Considine), a local amusement-arcade manager, we can see how much she would like to be in love with this man, and also how far away she is from succumbing. Artiom doesn't understand why his mother can't just fall in love with Alfie, and his perplexity is something that a lot of divorced parents, and their children, will be able to recognize. *Last Resort* is one of the few films to get at the ways in which single mothers and their sons alternate being authority figures. Because Pawlikowski allows his actors much leeway in improvising their characters and dialogue, the relationships in this film have a tentativeness and a fluidity that seem natural without being overbearingly "real."

Pawlikowski is a social realist almost as an afterthought. He films much of the action with a handheld jitteriness, but he's trying to capture the wayward poetry of these people as they play out their fantasies of survival and redemption. Ultimately, what he gives us is so good that we want more: not just a resonant sketch but a filled-in canvas. The difficulty with the director's improvisatory approach is that it can't sustain the riches that arise from it. The last section, in which the three leads make a run for it, is tossed off. But at least *Last Resort* is unsatisfying at a very high level. It fritters away more than most movies ever offer up.

In brief: The Price of Milk, FROM NEW Zealand, gets points for oddness. Excellence is another matter. Danielle Cormack and Karl Urban play a loving couple living against a backdrop of verdant valleys that look like they might have been used for *Xena: Warrior Princess* or *Hercules*. Mysterious crones, Maori golfer gangs, sprawling quilts, dairy cows, and baby shoes figure heavily in the mix. It's *un*magical realism. . . . **Rhythm 'n' Bayous,** finishing out its run at the Screening Room, is the latest live-wire musical chronicle by the documentarian Robert Mugge, and it's billed, quite literally, as a "road map to Louisiana music." Practitioners of Cajun, Creole, and zydeco music strut their stuff. So do the players of a style new to me but instantly beloved: I'm speaking of swamp pop. ■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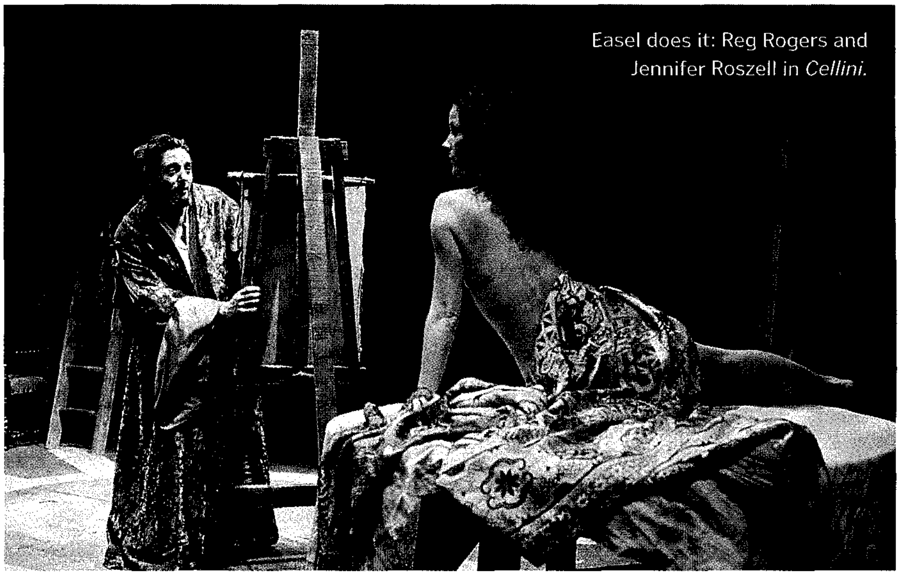
Brush With Fame

John Patrick Shanley is somewhat moonstruck by the life of Cellini, extracting good stuff from the artist's autobiography but adding few of his own insights.



Easel does it: Reg Rogers and Jennifer Roszell in *Cellini.*

BENVENUTO CELLINI WAS NOT only a great goldsmith and distinguished sculptor but also a fine enough writer for Goethe to have translated his famous autobiography, *The Life of Benvenuto Cellini,* into German. That work has now inspired **Cellini**, a play on which John Patrick Shanley labored for years. Though it would have been better as a movie (Shanley also writes screenplays, e.g., *Moonstruck*), the result is not boring, merely a letdown. This Shanley *Cellini* makes me yearn for what a Fellini *Cellini* might have been.

The author himself, as he usually does, directed. Immediately bothersome was that old Hollywood error of having the characters speak with heavy Italian—or, at the court of Francis I, heavy French—accents instead of in unaccented English and not struggling with usually too thick, too inconsistent, or too inept—and illogical—pronunciations. Even when Reg Rogers, as Cellini, manages a decent and consistent Italian accent, it has, for our ears, entirely wrong connotations.

A greater problem is how to convey a life as full, varied, and adventurous—as well as often on the wrong side of the law—as Cellini's within the limited scope of a play. The more so if the protagonist is a controversial artist and you wish to present his artistic struggles. Shanley, who is of partly Italian descent, has often attacked Italo-American subjects, but that is not the same as the Italian Renaissance.

Shanley, moreover, wants to write both a fairly straightforward, realistic comedy-drama and a hip, stylized, anti-naturalistic entertainment with absurdist choruses, dead men summoned back to life, lots of playing up to the audience—a tricky combination. And, as you might expect, no simple slavish adherence to the published *Life* but free authorial invention.

The strategy was to concentrate on two aspects of Cellini's life: the relationship of the artist with his divers and diverse patrons, and his relation with his life model and mistress, the Frenchwoman Caterina. All this is either sketchily (Caterina) or amply (the patrons) present in the *Life,* but even a cursory comparison reveals that most of the good stuff is straight Cellini, to which Shanley's expansion adds scant insight and insufficient dramatization. For example, he does not explore Benvenuto's catching Caterina in flagrante with his apprentice, or Caterina and her mother's lawsuit against Cellini for alleged sodomy. We know from the *Life* that he beat the "vicious whore" and "miserable baggage," as he calls her, but there is nothing in the book about her *wanting* to be beaten by him. Shanley invents and toys with an S&M relationship but does not develop it.

He does more with Benvenuto's travails with his four main patrons: the benevolent Pope Clement VII, the whimsical French king Francis I, the mean-spirited Pope Paolo III, and the indecisive Duke Cosimo de' Medici of Florence, though neither of the play's two master themes is deeply enough probed and they don't significantly interact.

Even so, this is not a dull evening, but it could use better acting. Reg Rogers is a satisfactory but not memorable Cellini. Richard Russell Ramos is fine as Pope Paolo but too piddling as the French king. The fetching Jennifer Roszell, as Caterina, is spirited but hasn't much to work with. And Daniel Oreskes, as the Duke of Florence, is common and dismal.

Adrianne Lobel's set (but for a strangely tilted door), Martin Pakledinaz's costumes, and particularly Brian Nason's lighting are thoroughly workmanlike, and the author's direction, especially in the casting of the Perseus statue, is unexceptionable. But even as Shanley's language and that of J. Addington Symonds's 1888 translation of the *Life* clash here, so do the cinquecento and contemporary sensibilities.

Cellini
Written and directed by John Patrick Shanley; starring Reg Rogers. At Second Stage Theater.
See Theater listings for details.

A Connecticut Yankee
Encores! presentation of the Rodgers and Hart musical at City Center.

THE FIRST *ENCORES!* PRESENTATION UNDER the new artistic directorship of Jack Vier-

Photograph by Joan Marcus.

tel, **A Connecticut Yankee** (1927, revised 1943), was a trifle disappointing. Based on Mark Twain's satirical novel but greatly attenuated by Herbert Fields's book, it has a Rodgers & Hart score, good but not their best. Three numbers stand out and are duly—or, rather, unduly—reprised. The remaining songs contribute only modestly.

The real problem, however, is the plot. The eponymous Yankee, Martin Barrett, is hit over the head with a champagne bottle by his unloved bride-to-be, Fay Morgan, when she catches his true love, Alice Carter, in his lap. This propels him into Camelot, where his prospective father-in-law becomes King Arthur, Alice becomes Alisande (or Sandy), Fay Morgan is transformed into Morgan Le Fay, and so on. Funny things befall him and continue when he returns to Hartford.

The usually skillful David Ives was unable to make the plot perspicuous in this semi-staged version. Of course, minimal costumes and scenery inevitably forfeit not only comic stage effects but also basic clarity. To be sure, Lorenz Hart's lyrics feature consistently delightful rhymes; much of the humor depends on the linguistic dislocations, as in "Thou Swell." Wordplay—some good, some not—is everywhere. Example: "She has called him a succor." "A sucker?!" Again: "As for marriage, it is the opium of the couple." Whoever is responsible for at least a dozen putative gags involving the word *withal* should, with all due respect, have been restrained.

The company is amiable enough. Christine Ebersole, atypically cast as Morgan Le Fay, couldn't have been more fey, and so, if I may rhyme, was Mark Lotito as Sir Kay. Judith Blazer and Henry Gibson (Sandy, Arthur) proved dependable as always, with Steven Sutcliffe a passable Martin. The best work came from the two dancers, Seán Martin Hingston and Nancy Lemenager, who, granted, had the best opportunities. Rob Fisher and the orchestra dazzled with Don Walker's glorious orchestrations.

Susan H. Schulman, who directed (uninspiredly), and Rob Ashford, who choreographed (quite nicely), performed similarly and simultaneously in the space below for *Time and Again*, another time-tripping musical, which must have involved considerable stair-tripping. They did better upstairs than down. ■

CLASSICAL MUSIC **PETER G. DAVIS**

French Kiss

Diva Ruth Ann Swenson comes into her own as flirty Manon; the new *New Grove*, missteps and all, is a monumental achievement.

IT WAS NOT A GLAMOROUS PREmiere and few of the beautiful people were there, but the evening when the Metropolitan Opera brought its fourteen-year-old production of **Manon** back into the repertory will probably be one of my fonder memories of the current season. Perhaps that's partly because each time Massenet's adorable opera returns, the Met upgrades the cast and Peter McClintock continues to sharpen and fine-tune the stage action, a vast improvement over the late Jean-Pierre Ponnelle's original, oddly faceless direction.

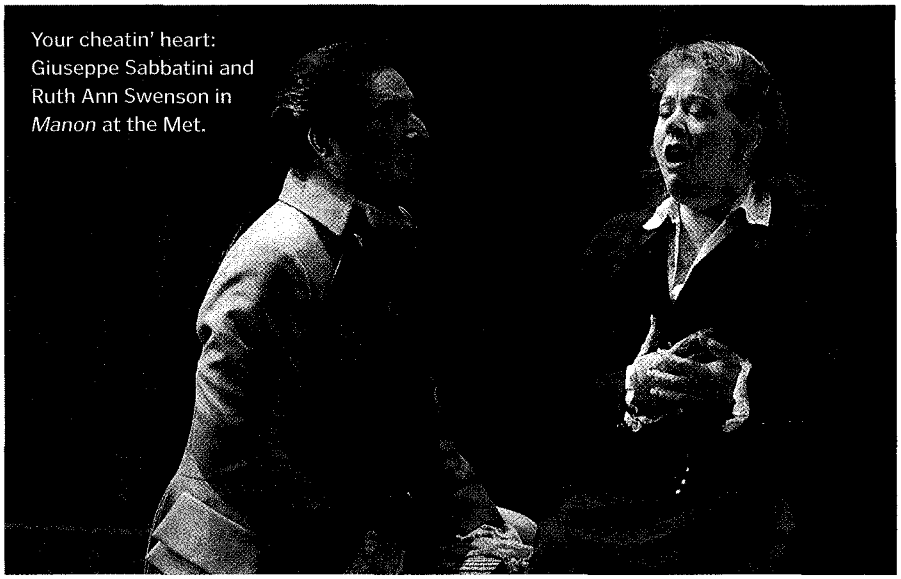
The major surprise is Ruth Ann Swenson in the title role. Yes, this soprano, when she is in form, charms the ear with a lovely, satin-smooth voice and a formidable coloratura technique. But she also tends to be a maddeningly bland singer, deficient in expressive range and dramatic specificity, which has made her recent excursions into the heavier bel canto, Verdi, and Puccini operas deadly dull. I can't say that her Manon is exactly prismatic or that she explores every facet of this self-destructive coquette and her lightning mood changes. Still, Swenson's characterization has few blank moments, and she shapes the music with a seductive tenderness that is likely to meet with the approval of even the most exacting Manon connoisseurs.

Better yet is Giuseppe Sabbatini in his Met debut as Des Grieux. This Italian tenor makes something of a specialty of French opera, and the slight nasal buzz, tightly focused tone, and articulate clarity of his voice are certainly to the manner born. Although not a large sound, it projects clearly, even when reduced to a whispered pianissimo; everything about this distinguished interpretation, visually as well as vocally, is elegantly refined without any loss of virility or presence. The most distinguished Italian interpreters of Des Grieux in my experience have included Giuseppe di Stefano and Cesare Valletti, and Sabbatini defi-

Manon
The Massenet opera, conducted by Julius Rudel, at the Metropolitan Opera. See In Concert listings for details.

The New Grove Dictionary
Second edition.

Le Roi Arthus
The opera by Chausson, conducted by Leon Botstein at Avery Fisher Hall.



Your cheatin' heart: Giuseppe Sabbatini and Ruth Ann Swenson in *Manon* at the Met.

Photograph by Beatriz Schiller.

nitely belongs in their company. Paul Plishka (Count des Grieux) and Roberto de Candia (Lescaut) sound rather rough opposite these two suave protagonists, but no serious damage is done. Few musicians find more lyrical grace and rhythmic buoyancy in *Manon* than Julius Rudel, who, at 80, leads a performance as fresh and vigorous as the ones he conducted for Beverly Sills at the City Opera more than 30 years ago.

THE SECOND EDITION OF **The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians** looks imposing up there on the shelf. Published at a list price of $4,850, this classic reference tool contains 29 volumes, 25 million words, and 29,499 articles by more than 6,000 contributors from 98 countries, and it weighs in at 118.9 pounds. Needless to say, this will be a limited report—I've lived with both the print and online versions for just a few weeks, and there is still much to digest between *A* ("A preposition found particularly in 16th- and 17th-century editions of polyphonic music . . .") and *Zywny, Wojciech; 1756–1842* ("Polish piano teacher and composer of Bohemian origin . . ."). Come to think of it, I never quite finished exploring the "old" *New Grove,* which appeared in 1980 and now seems skimpy at a mere twenty volumes.

"Sir George Grove would be astonished at how his child has grown over the past century."

It's probably safe to say that Sir George Grove, who labored over his first four-volume dictionary of music between 1878 and 1890, would be astonished at how his child has grown over the past century. Unlike the 1980 edition, which threw out nearly everything contained in its 1954 predecessor and started over from scratch, the latest *Grove* both expands and updates existing material while taking a fresh look at many basic areas of global music. *More* and *better* were obviously the editorial watchwords.

Numerous lengthy biographies, work lists, and bibliographies devoted to the giants of Western music—Brahms, Stravinsky, Bartók, Handel, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Mahler, Monteverdi, and many others—have been newly written to reflect the latest scholarly findings and ever-changing attitudes toward these composers, while countless standard topics are also reconsidered and reappraised.

Many new subjects are examined: postmodernism, gay and lesbian music, borrowing, nationalism, even spoofs (Stanley Sadie, the *Grove*'s editor, still winces at the mention of Dag Henrik Esrum-Hellerup, 1803–1891, a fictitious Danish musician that a playful colleague planted in the last edition). Styles and genres, technical terms and forms, the musical histories of virtually every country and major city on earth, the aesthetics and psychology of music, music education and musicology, performance practices, theory and analysis, musical instruments, musicians' biographies, and work lists—the sheer scope of the dictionary is now more breathtaking than ever. To get an idea of just how much the *Grove* covers, glance through Volume 29, an 813-page index designed as a practical guide as well as as an aid for curious readers who simply want to browse.

Only continued usage can test the editors' ambitious goal of encompassing music of every time, every place, and every type. One complaint about the 1980 *Grove* was the feeling that, despite the attention given to world music, pop, and jazz, the overall tone of the dictionary tended to lack historical perspective and isolate itself from nonmusical cultures. That issue has now been addressed, and if the essays on such new subjects as deconstruction, feminism, Marxism and Nazism, gender, and other hot-button topics stir up controversy, so much the better.

Homer nodded occasionally, and so does *Grove.* I'm disappointed that my own field did not get better treatment. The article on music criticism since 1945 is a rare lapse, a skewed, self-serving effort by Edward Rothstein, who shamelessly promotes himself and leaves many important issues unaddressed. The criteria that decree who among the living are to be included and who omitted often seem arbitrary or a result of partisan politics: Dropping impresario-conductor Sarah Caldwell, who had an entry in 1980 and contributed so much to the opera scene in the sixties and seventies, strikes me as deplorable, while giving a minor vocal talent like Ashley Putnam equal space with Eleanor Steber, one of America's greatest singers, is positively eccentric.

The most dramatic innovation of the new edition is its online availability (www. grovemusic.com). The immediate advantage is economic for those who can't afford the print edition: Individual online subscriptions cost $295 annually or $30 per month, while hourly access is available through the *Grove*'s MetroPass. Another plus of the electronic version is editorial flexibility, essential in living-composer entries, which are by nature outdated the moment they appear. Right now, the plan is to update straightforward facts on a quarterly basis, while areas that the editors feel require revision or entirely new articles will be considered annually. And, of course, any errors that crept into the print edition will be corrected as they are found. I have discovered a few minor ones, but the biggest gaffe so far—a large chunk missing from Stravinsky's work list—has already been seen to, and purchasers of the books will receive a reprint of the full list.

Whether the electronic *Grove* will eventually make future print editions unnecessary remains to be seen. The online version offers many benefits beyond its affordability: sophisticated search facilities, a browser function designed for the nonspecialist, links to related topics in the dictionary as well as to other Internet sites, even brief sound files to identify instruments. Some will always feel more comfortable and focused with a book than a screen, but in whatever form one consults it, and despite inevitable flaws, the latest *Grove* more than lives up to pianist Alfred Brendel's eloquent description: "A library, a source of stimulation, a sparring partner, a mirror to live with . . ."

IT'S AMAZING THAT ERNEST CHAUSSON'S **Le Roi Arthus** turns up so seldom, even on connoisseurs' wish lists. Leave it to Leon Botstein and the American Symphony Orchestra to bring this luminous opera to our attention, which they did recently in Avery Fisher Hall. A man of broad culture as well as a composer of strength and originality, Chausson used the legend of King Arthur, Lancelot, and Guinevere to express his own singular vision of tragic love, moral responsibility, and a better world.

Completed in 1895, the score was automatically branded Wagnerian, and that influence is undeniable. What's truly astonishing, though, is how far Chausson managed to distance himself from Wagner to fashion a distinctive, contained rhapsodic language that sounds like no one else's—there can be few musical apotheoses more ecstatic than the one in this opera, as the dying Arthur is transported to Avalon. Botstein, clearly a man with a mission, conducted a performance that was both a labor of love and skill, while the three principal singers—Andrew Schroeder, Hugh Smith, and Nicolle Foland—sang with the commitment and expressive fire that is precisely what this gorgeous music requires. ■

ART MARK STEVENS

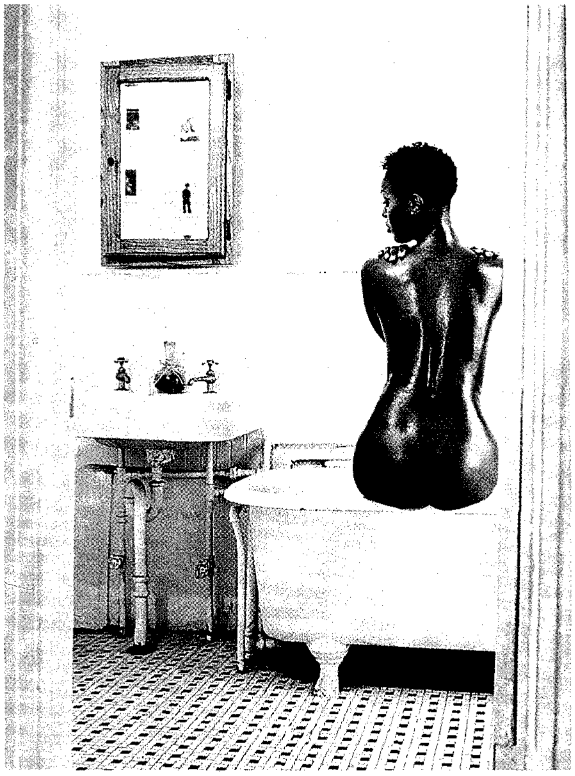
Commitment-phobia

Though "Committed to the Image" is itself noncommittal in its approach to contemporary black photography, it includes some strikingly beautiful pictures.

Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers
At the Brooklyn Museum of Art; through 4/29.

THE POSTER FOR **Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers** is a challenging picture by Delphine A. Fawundu called *Patiently Waiting.* It depicts a naked woman, seen from the back, who sits on the side of a tub in an old bathroom. She is looking to one side and has clasped her hands to her shoulders, as if to lock up her front. Her glistening back is womanly and very black, an eye-popping black that dominates and transcends her dingy white surroundings. Her curvilinear form claims—as if by right—the stately inheritance of the marbled white nudes of Western art. (Some will be reminded of Ingres, who traced the classical outline of paradise in a woman's back.) But for what, you may ask, is this woman "patiently waiting"? For more than just a lover, certainly. Her back is both an invitation and a closed door. She awaits whoever can unlock the potential in her form—and release that amplitude, that berry-rich dream of blackness.

Back in black: *Patiently Waiting,* by Delphine A. Fawundu.



Patiently Waiting is one of the more startling works in "Committed to the Image," a survey that's rather tame by the standards of contemporary art. There are few, if any, pictures that appear particularly angry, shocking, or iconoclastic. The show is a collaboration among four people—Anthony Barboza, Beuford Smith, Orville Robertson, and Barbara Head Millstein—that covers the field instead of presenting one strong point of view. It places the pictures into small thematic groupings, such as "beauty," "justice," "performance," "religion," "portraits." It includes 94 photographers, young, old, and middle-aged, working in a wide variety of styles and traditions. With such a large, varied crowd of artists and themes, it seems absurd to draw any all-encompassing generalizations about black art. "Black" just contains too many colors.

But the show did leave me with some smaller observations. Black photographers are often resolutely optimistic. It almost seems as if many of these photographers do not have the time or the luxury to indulge in fashionable despair or arty aesthetics—not while the poor are making do or transcending their circumstances. There can be something formal about a photographic document, like a sermon in Martin Luther King's church. In Jim Collier's *Living Room (One-Room Shack)—Southern U.S.A.,* the harsh details of life in the shack are not avoided, but neither are they emphasized. The bleaching bright light picks out three children—and their three very different poses are full of life and cockiness. In the portraits, the photographers rarely strip away the façade in order to reveal an anxious inner life. Instead, they celebrate strength. The sugar-cane worker in Chandra McCormick's portrait *Mark Gale* is the sort of strong, handsome—even beautiful—working-class hero that once dazzled the thirties.

The strongest photographs in the show have a mysterious, iconic power that seems to unite a difficult present and a visionary future. In some cases, the "black-and-whiteness" of black-and-white photography actually serves as a subtle purveyor of meaning. In Budd Williams's *Snow Dancer,* which is full of tonal messages, a shadowy black man in a baseball cap ploddingly shovels snow under the billboard image of a polished black dancer, who is wearing a top hat and carries a walking stick. The white snow the worker clears away leaves behind a rough gash of black. LeRoy W. Henderson Jr.'s *Untitled* shows a slender, very black-skinned girl in a white and lacy ballerina's dress. Like the woman in *Patiently Waiting,* she is looking dreamily outside the frame. Behind her is a carefully composed classical frieze, which depicts figures boisterously singing and dancing. Her own white-stockinged legs, illuminated by the light, are in a balletic pose; her hands are folded across her waist in an almost Buddhist way. (Lest the picture appear too seamless, one of the dancing boys in the frieze has lost a leg.) The girl seems delicately poised between black and white, art and reality, past and present, youth and eternity, bedlam and meditation. ■

Photograph courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum of Art.

Roll Playing

Part dockside shanty, part upscale seafood boîte, Mary's Fish Camp on West Fourth Street appeals to the inner lobsterman lurking in every serious eater.

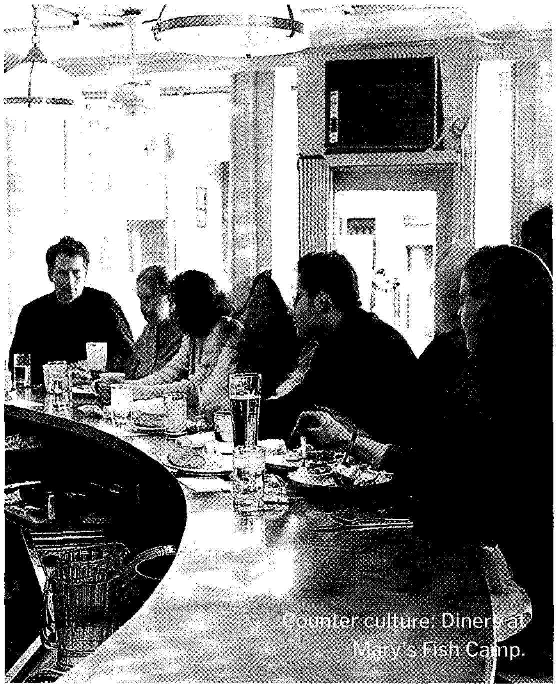
LIKE LOTS OF MARRIED COUPLES, my wife and I live our lives within a pattern of subtle compromise and disagreement. She is slim and well-put-together; I'm large and unkempt. She considers my outlook on the world to be amusingly relaxed; I consider hers to be amusingly fastidious. Our conceptions of the perfect sandwich are, therefore, revealing. Her ideal sandwich is a tidy Parisian structure, a streamlined baguette filled with bits of tomato and cheese. My perfect sandwich is as big as an aircraft carrier and meant to be eaten with a fork. Sometimes I'll make furtive pilgrimages to the Carnegie Deli to dine on that whopper classic, the hot pastrami on rye. I like to take the rye off the top and eat the pastrami first. When it's reduced to a manageable size, I'll put the rye back on (with coleslaw and a dab of Russian dressing), then finish the remains with a flourish. But when I describe this fatso methodology to my wife, she just rolls her eyes. "That's a *structurally unsound* sandwich," she says.

So imagine her reaction to my promise of a light lunch of lobster rolls and beer at **Mary's Fish Camp**, a new seafood restaurant in Greenwich Village. "Mary" is Mary Redding, the co-founder of the famous Pearl Oyster Bar on Cornelia Street. The Pearl is a slip of a place where, for $17, you can buy a lobster roll the size of a small toaster. Mary and her former partner squabbled over the rights to this gratifying dish, among others, and in the aftermath, Mary decided to start her own establishment. Mary's Fish Camp is poky in the way the Pearl is, with plain navy-and-gray walls, plywood banquettes, and a curved eating bar covered in tin. Mary has a fondness for Malpeque oysters; lards her chowder with double-smoked bacon, the way they fix it at Pearl; and accompanies her rolls (clam, lobster) with tall thatches of fried string potatoes. Her lobster roll is so structurally unsound that when my wife caught a glimpse of it, she gave a little yelp of dismay.

But Mary's lobster roll doesn't actually look like a lobster roll at all. It's a Goliath portion of meat, mixed in a mass of Hellmann's mayonnaise, tottering atop a tiny hot-dog bun. The tower of fries gives it the air of something that needs to be defused instead of eaten. The same was true of my clam roll, which consisted of seven clams exactly (for the relative bargain price of $11), golden-fried, on a bed of tartar sauce thick with pickles. The cod sandwich, which I sampled later on, was served in a puffy, muffaletta-style bread, slathered with another type of tartar made with capers and chopped red onion. This wasn't meant to be consumed like a normal sandwich, either, but if you tried, flakes of creamy fish came seeping out the sides. My wife didn't dare attempt this with her lobster roll and waited patiently as I excavated its top layers with my fork. The roll, when we located it, was butter-toasted like you find at the more reputable road stands in Maine. I cut it in half, and she took a few tea-sandwich bites. "That's not half bad," she said.

Mary's Fish Camp
246 West 4th Street (646-486-2185). Lunch, Monday through Saturday noon to 3 P.M.; dinner, Monday through Saturday 6 to 11 P.M. Appetizers, $6 to $10; entrées, $18 to $25. A.E., M.C., V.

Mary's more sophisticated recipes aren't bad, either. The fact that some of them are more or less doppelgänger versions of dishes being served over at the Pearl doesn't detract from their flavor. Mary's New England clam chowder packs a rich punch, since the onions and potatoes are rendered in bacon fat. So does the lobster pot pie, which contains an assortment of vegetables, a dose of heavy cream, plus a crumbly pastry crust. Fried oysters and clams come mingled as a tasty appetizer, which I watched porno king Al Goldstein devour at the bar one evening. Two generous salads (baby greens with Gorgonzola; watercress and endive with oven-dried tomatoes) are available for more delicate eaters, plus steamed clams, two varieties of shrimp (boiled and salted), and a labor-intensive delicacy called lobster knuckles.


Counter culture: Diners at Mary's Fish Camp.

Mary's threadbare, bait-shack interior can look a bit bereft during the day, but the atmosphere heats up considerably at night. Seafood addicts crowd around the bar, and if enough people order chowder or the grilled lobster (split in half, over lava coals), the big storefront windows steam up a little. Among the three varieties of grilled fish, my favorite was the daurade, otherwise known as French sea bass. The pan-seared salmon sat on a white-wine ragout of navy beans and shiitake mushrooms and was perfectly

Photographs by Kenneth Chen.

High Camp: lobster roll and cod sandwich.

cooked to order both times I sampled it. My favorite of the specials was a helping of four-day boat scallops—seared flat, and sweet as plums—on a mound of tomato risotto, with frizzled leeks on top. If you want a combination of these delicacies, order the bouillabaisse, which comes in a slim glass bowl, with a King Kong lobster claw sticking out the top. All sorts of ocean goodies are buried inside, and when you've finished deconstructing all the shells and claws, you can sop up the extravagant remains with two huge croutons rubbed with garlic.

My wife assisted in the tasting of one or two of these dishes, but in the end, I did most of the damage at Mary's Fish Camp alone. There's something about fine seafood that lends itself to solitary dining. Maybe it's that you often eat at the bar at fish joints, or that certain elemental seafood meals have dreamy, personalized associations. Fresh lobster always reminds me of Maine, for instance, and fried oysters always remind me of summer. The three desserts at Mary's are all designed to enhance these little Proustian moments. A fluffy tapioca pudding is made fluffier by a dollop of whipped cream, and while I spooned it down, a portly man on the next bar stool murmured, "It's just like Grandma's." There's also a chewy blueberry-almond tart, which my grandma couldn't have concocted in a million years, and a monster vanilla sundae spiked with a dense chocolate sauce. The sundae comes in a prim, wife-size version, too, with a little piece of peanut brittle on top. That's the one I ordered, after a few moments of guilty deliberation. Sometimes, enough is just enough. ■

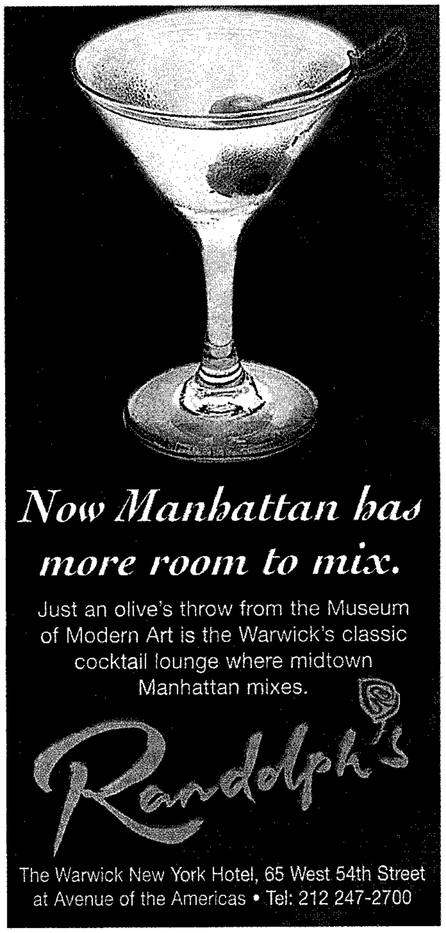
John Leonard's TV Notes

The Target Shoots First (FEBRUARY 20; 8 to 9:15 P.M.; Cinemax) follows Chris Wilcha and his video camera from college, where he majored in philosophy and minored in rock bands, into a trainee job at Columbia House, the CD mail-order "club" owned jointly by Sony and Time Warner, where he is supposed to be a Gen-X expert on alternative music and will discover jargon, focus groups, corporate folk rites, sellout, and serfdom. Only the suicide of Kurt Cobain recalls him to his senses and saves his soul, after which an M.F.A. in film/video.

The Remorseful Day (February 22; 9 to 11 P.M.; Channel 13) finishes off John Thaw's Inspector Morse for good, in a case he should have let Kevin Whately's Sergeant Lewis handle in the first place—because Morse knew the victim (Meg Davies, found naked and handcuffed to her bed, with her brains bashed in) either too well or not well enough. There is a surprisingly high body count and enough plausible suspects to stock a whole season, plus, of course, a requiem. A sad and satisfying end to thirteen years of sex and violence in seething Oxford.

Boycott (February 24; 8 to 10 P.M.; HBO) stars Jeffrey Wright as young Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Carmen Ejogo as Coretta Scott King, Terrence Howard as Ralph Abernathy, CCH Pounder as JoAnn Robinson, Reg E. Cathey as E. D. Nixon, and Iris Little-Thomas as Rosa Parks in a docudrama about the 382-day Montgomery bus boycott of 1955–56, directed by *Homicide*'s Clark Johnson. Actual film footage is interpolated into the standard narrative, along with "re-created" film footage made to look real, not to mention "simulated" home movies to make us see what's happening as if by accident. Wright has Dr. King to an eerie exactitude. And don't miss a bravura performance by Erik Todd Dellums as Bayard Rustin.

Kate Brasher (February 24; 9 to 10 P.M.; CBS) is a new mid-season dramatic series starring Mary Stuart Masterson as a single mother working two jobs to raise her teenage boys who seeks legal help at a community-advocacy center run by Hector Elizondo and Rhea Perlman and ends up embarking on a new career as a social worker herself. You will like all these people a lot, even if such terrible things seldom happen in this country to such stunning blondes. ■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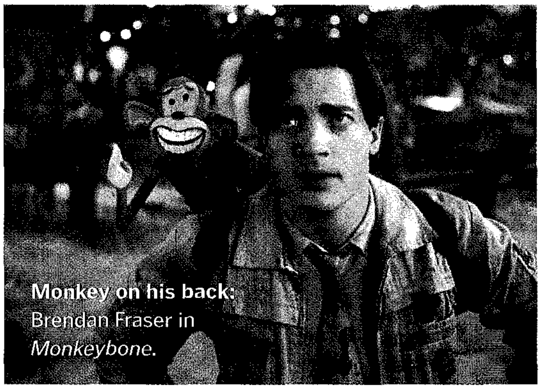
Movies

Edited by Derek de Koff

This Week's Releases

Monkeybone
A successful cartoonist (Brendan Fraser) falls into a coma, and his spirit is transported to an odd limbo in which he must outwit Death (Whoopi Goldberg). (2 hrs.; NR) • Opens 2/23.


Monkey on his back: Brendan Fraser in *Monkeybone*.

New Films

★ Almost Famous
Cameron Crowe's sweetly engaging coming-of-age movie is set mostly in 1973, and it's about a 15-year-old rock journalist, played by Patrick Fugit, who hooks up with a touring, Led Zeppelin–ish band in order to write a cover story about them for *Rolling Stone*. (Rainer; 9/18/00) (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) • The Screening Room; AMC Empire 25 Theatres.

★ Before Night Falls
Javier Bardem gives an astonishing, freewheeling performance as the gay Cuban literary exile Reinaldo Arenas, who in 1990 died in New York from AIDS. Julian Schnabel directs, and he combines an extraordinary range of emotional colorations. (Rainer; 1/8/01) (2 hrs. 13 mins; R) • CC Village East; Clearview's Chelsea; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Pavilion.

Billy Elliot
A striking miner's son furtively studies ballet and eventually wins over his hard-nosed dad. (Rainer; 10/23/00) (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) • CC Village East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Eastside Playhouse; Kew Gardens Cinemas; North Shore Towers.

★ Cast Away
Tom Hanks plays a FedEx systems engineer who is stranded on a remote and uninhabited island in the South Pacific in this Robert Zemeckis movie. At its best, the film is a graceful and resonant fable about isolation and the will to endure, but a heavy cloud of inspirationalism hangs over it. (Rainer; 12/25/00) (2 hrs. 17 mins.; PG-13) • Battery Park City Cinema; UA Union Square; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Clearview's Park and 86th St.; Bay Plaza; Whitestone; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.

★ Charlie's Angels
Cameron Diaz, Drew Barrymore, and Lucy Liu play the new generation of Angels in this daffy, spirited movie which also features a prize collection of male crazies, including Bill Murray, Tim Curry, and Crispin Glover. (Rainer; 11/7/00) (1 hr. 43 mins.; PG) • CO Worldwide Cinemas.

Last Resort
See Rainer, page 62. (1 hr. 15 mins.; NR) • Opens 2/23.

Southern Comfort
Kate Davis directs this documentary about Robert Eads, a female-to-male transsexual who struggled with ovarian cancer. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) • Opens 2/23.

3000 Miles to Graceland
Kevin Costner and Kurt Russell star as two crooks in Las Vegas who dress up as Elvis impersonators in the hopes of getting away with millions. (1 hr. 45 mins.; PG-13) • Opens 2/23.

Chocolat
Juliette Binoche plays the owner of a chocolate shop whose dainties bewitch a small town. Co-stars Johnny Depp and Alfred Molina; Lasse Hallström directs. (1 hr. 41 mins.; PG-13) • Battery Park City Cinema; CC Angelika Film Center; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; Sony Lincoln Square; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.

★ Chunhyang
The veteran Korean director Im Kwon Taek renders a masterful take on an eighteenth-century folk tale. (Rainer; 1/08/01) (2 hrs.; NR) • Quad Cinema.

★ Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Set in nineteenth-century China, this Ang Lee movie is a ravishing martial-arts romance with sequences as magical as anything in the movies. Chow Yun-Fat and Michelle Yeoh star as great warriors and friends with a deep, unspoken ardor for each other; Zhang Ziyi, a marvelous young actress, is their nemesis. (Rainer; 12/11/00) (1 hr. 54 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; CC Angelika Film Center; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; UA Gemini; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; BAM Rose Cinemas; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; UA Marboro; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Double Take
Orlando Jones stars as a banker framed for laundering money who unwittingly exchanges passports with a man who's an actual criminal (Eddie Griffin). (1 hr. 28 mins.; PG-13) • AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; New Coliseum; Nova; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Ridgewood; Kaufman Astoria Cinema.

Down to Earth
See Rainer, page 62. (1 hr. 34 mins.; PG-13) • Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Metro Cinema; Loews 84th Street; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay; UA Movies at Bayside; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.

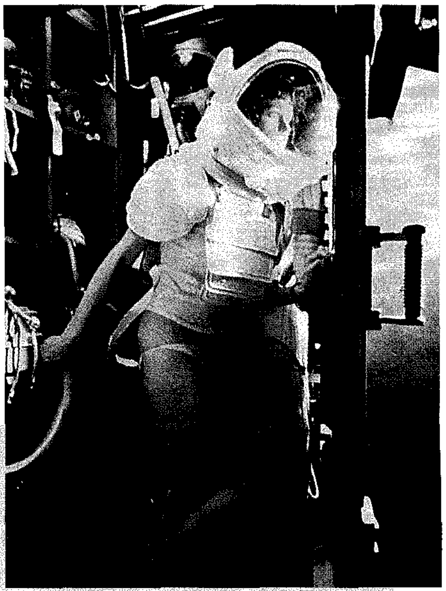
Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas
Jim Carrey is the live-action embodiment of Dr. Seuss's classic Christmas grump. Ron Howard directs. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG) • Kew Gardens Cinemas.

The Emperor's New Groove
Eartha Kitt, Sting, and David Spade lend their voices to this animated fable about an ancient diva with witchy powers—with Kitt, of course, in the leading role. (1 hr. 12 mins.; G) • AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Bay Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex.

Faithless
Liv Ullmann directs but does not appear in this drama of the anguish of infidelity scripted by Ingmar Bergman. (Rainer; 2/5/01) (2 hrs. 22 mins.; NR) • UA Union Square; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

Finding Forrester
Yet another tale from director Gus Van Sant about a kindly mentor (Sean Connery) who helps a troubled-though-brilliant student (Rob Brown) get his life together. (2 hrs. 16 mins.; PG-13) • Loews 19th St. East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Loews Coronet; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza.

The Gift
Cate Blanchett is a seer in a Georgia bayou whose readings for troubled local townsfolk are more like so-



Festivals

Great Scott

All right, so *Hannibal* failed to deliver the goods (except at the box office) and *Gladiator* might have been half an hour too long—but Ridley Scott still directed *Blade Runner* and *Alien* (starring Sigourney Weaver, pictured), both of which are included in the Screening Room's retrospective **The Films of Ridley Scott**. His feminist tract *Thelma & Louise* also gets thrown into the mix, as well as some early work (1977's *The Duellists*, starring Keith Carradine and Harvey Keitel) and one bizarro bomb (his 1985 sword-and-sorcery mess, *Legend*, starring an elfin Tom Cruise and the great Tim Curry, who still manages to chew the scenery despite being encased in several pounds of latex makeup). Begins February 23.

Photographs: top, courtesy of 20th Century Fox; bottom, courtesy of the Screening Room.

Ground Rules

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by Peter Rainer. Stars (★) denote current releases that New York recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element. Reviews are followed by the names of theaters where the film is playing.

cial-service sessions. Sam Raimi throws in an impressive amount of Gothic claptrap, and Blanchett is impressive as a woman who seems to be living in more than one world. But this is mostly a movie about the unseen in which what you see is what you get. Giovanni Ribisi, Hilary Swank, and Keanu Reeves are good in supporting roles. (Rainer; 1/29/01) (1 hr. 49 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; UA Union Square; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Sony Lincoln Square; Pavilion; Centre Sunnyside; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Hannibal
Anthony Hopkins is a plumper, more princely cannibal Hannibal Lecter this time out, and he's also more cartoonized—a figure of grisly fun. Julianne Moore replaces Jodie Foster as FBI agent Clarice Starling, and she gives a clenched-jaw performance that is skillful but out of keeping with the tone of flamboyant Grand Guignol burlesque. (Rainer; 2/19/01) (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; Clearview's Waverly; UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Clearview's Ziegfeld; Loews Astor Plaza; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Olympia; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; UA Marboro; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Crossbay II; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Head Over Heels
Monica Potter stars as a single city girl who unwittingly moves into an apartment with four gorgeous supermodels. (1 hr. 31 mins.; PG-13) • Battery Park City Cinema; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Loews New York Twin; Bay Plaza; Ridgewood; Canarsie; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Main Street Cinemas; UA Astoria.

★ The House of Mirth
In Terence Davies's rigorously elegant adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel set in 1905 New York, Gillian Anderson is Lily Bart, the socialite who is undone by the society she wants to become a part of. (Rainer; 1/1/01) (2 hrs. 4 mins.; NR) • Paris Theatre; Kew Gardens Cinemas.

In the Mood for Love
Wong Kar-Wai's new film is set in Hong Kong in 1962, but most of it is shot indoors. Trancelike yet chichi, it's an example of pop schlock aestheticism. Tony Leung and Maggie Cheung play neighbors whose respective spouses are having an affair. (Rainer; 2/6/01) (2 hrs. 10 mins.; R) • CC Angelika Film Center; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Clearview's Beekman; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; BAM Rose Cinemas.

The Invisible Circus
Jordana Brewster is the younger sister of a hippie-ish free spirit turned terrorist (Cameron Diaz) who, in 1971, attempts to make sense of her sibling's mysterious death. Blythe Danner, in a too-small role, plays the girl's mother, and she's the sole reason to check the movie out. (Rainer; 2/5/01) (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • Kew Gardens Cinemas.

Maléna
Giuseppe Tornatore directs this tragicomedy about a chic, mysterious woman (Monica Bellucci), the kind who regularly has gentleman callers fighting to light her cigarette. Giuseppe Sulfaro stars as the man who's been obsessed with her since he was 13. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) • CC Village East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3; Cinemart.

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Documentary

Two Against the World

"What first attracted me to Robert was the painful irony of his situation," says Kate Davis about the subject of her film **Southern Comfort** (which just won the Grand Jury Prize at this year's Sundance for Best Documentary). The film profiles Robert Eads (pictured, with Lola Cola), a 52-year-old female-to-male transsexual who lived in the Georgia hills until his death from ovarian cancer (he was turned down by more than twenty doctors who feared having a transgendered patient would hurt their practice). "For a long time, I couldn't even look at our footage after he died," Davis says. "I became very much involved in his life; once he gave himself over to the film, I felt like we were really working in tandem." Focusing on the final year of Eads's life, *Southern Comfort* primarily centers on his committed relationship with Lola, a male-to-female transsexual, and his aspiration to speak at Atlanta's Southern Comfort Conference, one of the largest annual transgendered gatherings in America. "I wanted this film to be the first of its kind," Davis says, "in that I wanted it to look at the transgendered community as people first, as opposed to basically putting them at the end of a microscope or treating them as oddities. I think *Boys Don't Cry* paved the way a little bit, but I still think it's hard for people to realize that being transgendered is just one part of a person's life—not the defining factor." *Southern Comfort* opens February 21 at Film Forum. D.D.K.

★ Meet the Parents
Lots of dumb jokes and misfires, but the rapport between Ben Stiller, playing a prospective son-in-law, and Robert De Niro, as the martinet father of his girlfriend, is rich. (Rainer; 10/9/00) (1 hr. 48 mins.; PG-13) • CO Worldwide Cinemas.

Miss Congeniality
A tomboy FBI agent (Sandra Bullock) must learn how to be glamorous in order to go undercover as a beauty-pageant contestant. Co-stars Candice Bergen and Michael Caine. (1 hr. 40 mins.; PG-13) • AMC Empire 25 Theatres; North Shore Towers.

Nico & Dani
Sexual-coming-of-age tale about two Spanish teenagers. Starring Fernando Ramallo and Jordi Vilches. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) • Cinema Village; Clearview's Cobble Hill.

★ O Brother, Where Art Thou?
Set in Depression-era Mississippi, this Coen brothers movie actually takes place in their usual rarefied and icy-hot postmodern Nowheresville. George Clooney, John Turturro, and Tim Blake Nelson star as escaped convicts; the shagginess of the performances is appealing. (1 hr. 46 mins.; PG-13) • UA Union Square; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; CC Sutton; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Sony Lincoln Square; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Kew Gardens Cinemas.

★ The Pledge
Sean Penn directed this movie starring Jack Nicholson as a retired Nevada homicide detective who can't let go of a hunch that a killer of young girls is still roaming free. Nicholson isn't his usual strutting satyr self here; his eyebrows don't go in for heavy calisthenics. (Rainer; 1/15/00) (1 hr. 48 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; UA Union Square; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews State; Loews New York Twin; Loews Orpheum 7; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Plaza; UA Movieworld.

The Price of Milk
See Rainer, page 62. (1 hr. 27 mins.; NR) • CC Angelika Film Center.

Proof of Life
Russell Crowe is a kidnap and ransom negotiator and Meg Ryan is the wife of an engineer (David Morse) who has been abducted in a South American country and needs rescuing. The chemistry between these two stars is nil. (Rainer; 12/25/00) (2 hrs. 3 mins.; R) • CO Worldwide Cinemas.

★ Quills
Geoffrey Rush plays Sade, imprisoned in the Charenton asylum for the insane, and he's a degenerate fop who smuggles scurrilous screeds out into the world with the help of a chambermaid (a radiant Kate Winslet). (Rainer; 11/27/00) (2 hrs. 10 mins.; R) • CC Village East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres.

Recess: School's Out
Allyce Beasley, Dabney Coleman, and Jason Davis lend their voices to this animated film about an evil high-school principal who aspires to eradicate summer vacation by using a special laser gun. (1 hr. 22 mins.; G) • CC Village East; Clearview's Chelsea West; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Sutton; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; Sony Lincoln Square; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; UA Crossbay II; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Requiem for a Dream
Darren Aronofsky's controversial adaptation of the Hubert Selby Jr. novel, which tells four parallel stories all dealing with addiction. Starring Ellen Burstyn, Jared Leto, and Jennifer Connelly. (1 hr. 42 mins.; NR) • Quad Cinema; AMC Empire 25 Theatres.

★ Rhythm 'n Bayous
See Rainer, page 62. (1 hr. 24 mins.; NR) • The Screening Room

Rugrats in Paris: The Movie
Those especially shrill animated children from the popular TV show shriek and bleat their way onto the big screen. (1 hr. 18 mins.; G) • CO Worldwide Cinemas; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Centre Sunnyside; Kew Gardens Cinemas; Main Street Cinemas; North Shore Towers; UA Crossbay.

Save the Last Dance
This romantic drama stars Julia Stiles as a young midwestern dance student who moves to Chicago after her mother dies in an automobile accident. There, she falls in love with a black boy, and must balance her serious ballet talent with the expected complications of interracial affairs. (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; New Coliseum; Nova; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Ridgewood; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Canarsie; Centre Sunnyside; Cinemart; Main Street Cinemas; Plaza; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Bayside; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.

Saving Silverman
Two friends try to stop their buddy from marrying the wrong woman. Starring Jason Biggs, Amanda Peet, and Neil Diamond as himself. (1 hr. 31 mins.; PG-13) • Battery Park City Cinema; UA Union Square; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Clearview's Chelsea West; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; UA East; UA Gemini; Loews 84th Street; Whitestone; UA Marboro; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; UA Crossbay; UA Movies at Bayside; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.

★ Shadow of the Vampire
Willem Dafoe triumphs as the actor-vampire Max Schreck in this uneven but sometimes chilling and witty film; Schreck was the actor who played the vampire in F.W. Murnau's 1922 silent classic. It's the conceit of this film that he was, indeed, an actual vampire. (Rainer; 1/8/01) (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; UA Union Square; Loews State; Clearview's Cobble Hill; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Kew Gardens Cinemas.

Snatch
Guy Ritchie's film is about warring factions of London gangsters and jewelers, and the subplots cross and recross in a way that's more exhausting than exhilarating. Ritchie has a startling talent for free-style mayhem, but he needs to slow things down a bit. Starring Brad Pitt and Benicio Del Toro. (Rainer; 1/29/01) (2 hrs. 10 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; Clearview's Waverly; UA Union Square; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Clearview's First & 62nd St.; Loews Orpheum 7; Sony Lincoln Square; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Kaufman Astoria Cinema.

★ State and Main
David Mamet's movie about a Hollywood movie crew invading a New England village has its share of syncopated nastiness and sharp satire, although the overall effect is surprisingly mild for Mamet. (Rainer; 1/2/01) (1 hr. 46 mins.; R) • UA Union Square; AMC Empire 25 Theatres.

Sugar and Spice
Marley Shelton, Mena Suvari, and Marla Sokoloff star in this black comedy about a high-school cheerleader who becomes pregnant and plans a heist to ensure her baby's financial future. Directed by Francine McDougall. (1 hr. 57 mins.; PG-13) • Battery Park City Cinema; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Bay Plaza; Centre Sunnyside; Cinemart; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas.

Sweet November
An ambitious executive (Keanu Reeves) sets up an unorthodox relationship with a young free spirit

Photograph by Kate Davis.

(Charlize Theron): A one-month trial relationship with no strings attached. (1 hr. 40 mins.; PG-13) • Loews Village; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Loews Coronet; Sony Lincoln Square; Pavilion; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay II; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island.

The Taste of Others
A successful businessman (Jean-Pierre Bacri) becomes immersed in the world of theater only to be gleefully taken advantage of by a cavalcade of artists. (1 hr. 52 mins.; NR) • CC Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.

★ Thirteen Days
A workmanlike but engrossing docudrama-style depiction of how the Kennedy White House dealt with the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kenny O'Donnell, a friend and adviser to both Jack and Bobby, is the White House aide who provides the focal point for most of the scenes. As played by Kevin Costner, he has a Boston accent that could use some coaching. (Rainer; 1/2/01) (2 hrs. 15 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; CC Murray Hill Cinemas; Loews 19th St. East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; CC Crown Gotham; Clearview's Park and 86th St.; Sony Lincoln Square; UA Movieworld.

★ Traffic
Steven Soderbergh directed this uneven mélange—a movie about drug trafficking. Much of it is smartly observed, and the cast is impressive, including Michael Douglas, Catherine Zeta-Jones, Benicio Del Toro, Don Cheadle, and many others. (Rainer; 1/2/01) (2 hrs. 20 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; Loews Village; Clearview's Chelsea; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews 72nd St. East; Loews Orpheum 7; Clearview's Metro Cinema; Sony Lincoln Square; Bay Plaza; Whitestone; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; UA Marboro; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; Atrium; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Valentine
David Boreanaz and Denise Richards star in this slasher film involving psychotic Valentine's Day cards and a creepy killer. (1 hr. 41 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; Loews 42nd Street E Walk; Loews Orpheum 7; Loews 84th Street; Magic Johnson Harlem USA; New Coliseum; Nova; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Ridgewood; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Canarsie; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Kaufman Astoria Cinema; Main Street Cinemas; UA Crossbay; UA Movies at Staten Island.

Vertical Limit
Chris O'Donnell stars as a climber who must rescue his sister atop the peaks of K2, one of the world's highest and most treacherous mountains. (1 hr. 41 mins.; PG-13) • CO Worldwide Cinemas.

The Wedding Planner
The ubiquitous Jennifer Lopez stars as a San Franciscan wedding planner who's trying to balance her career and a romance with a swarthy do-gooder (Matthew McConaughey). (1 hr. 31 mins.; R) • Battery Park City Cinema; CC Village East; Loews 19th St. East; Loews Kips Bay Theatre; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Loews Orpheum 7; UA Gemini; Loews 84th Street; New Coliseum; Bay Plaza; Concourse Plaza; Whitestone; Kent Triplex; Linden Boulevard Multiplex; Pavilion; Ridgewood; UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay; Centre Sunnyside; Jackson Triplex; Kew Gardens Cinemas; Main Street Cinemas; UA Astoria; UA Crossbay II; UA Movies at Bayside; UA Movieworld; Atrium; UA Hylan Plaza; UA Movies at Staten Island; YWCA Cine-Club.

What Women Want
A male-chauvinist pig (Mel Gibson) sees the error of his ways after a bump on the head gives him the ability to read women's minds. Co-stars Helen Hunt. (1 hr. 34 mins.; PG-13) • Loews State; Loews 84th Street; Cinemart; Kaufman Astoria Cinema.

Yi Yi
Edward Yang's complicated tale examining the relationship between a mother and son, and the nature of family in general. (2 hrs. 53 mins.; NR) • *Cinema Village.*

★ You Can Count On Me
Writer-director Kenneth Lonergen's wonderfully small-scale movie stars Mark Ruffalo and Laura Linney as reunited brother and sister, and theirs is one of the most convincing portrayals of family connection I've ever seen. They get all the feints and parries between siblings just right. (Rainer; 10/23/00) (1 hr. 51 mins.; R) • CC Village East; AMC Empire 25 Theatres; Clearview's 59th Street East; Clearview's 62nd and Broadway.

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

Battery Park City Cinema
102 North End Ave. (212-945-3418) • Cast Away; Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; The Gift; Hannibal; Head Over Heels; The Pledge; Save the Last Dance; Saving Silverman; Shadow of the Vampire; Snatch; Sugar and Spice; Thirteen Days; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

CC Angelika Film Center
18 W. Houston St. (212-995-2000) • Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; In the Mood for Love; Pollock; The Price of Milk; The Taste of Others.

CC Village East
189 Second Ave. (212-529-6799) • Before Night Falls; Billy Elliot; Maléna; Quills; Recess: School's Out; The Wedding Planner; You Can Count On Me.

Cinema Village
22 E. 12th St. (212-924-3363) • Journey to the Sun; Nico & Dani; Yi Yi.

Clearview's Waverly
323 Sixth Ave. (212-777-FILM#603) • Hannibal; Snatch.

Film Forum
209 W. Houston St. (212-727-8110) • Bad Company; A Hard Day's Night; The Legend of Rita; Satyricon. (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Loews Village
66 Third Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#952) • Down to Earth; Save the Last Dance; Sweet November; Traffic.

Quad Cinema
34 W. 13th St. (212-255-8800) • Chunhyang; Left Behind; Requiem for a Dream; Voyages.

The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100) • Almost Famous; Fever. (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

UA Union Square
13th St. and Broadway (212-253-2225) • Cast Away; Faithless; The Gift; Hannibal; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; The Pledge; Saving Silverman; Shadow of the Vampire; Snatch; State and Main.

14th–41st Streets

CC Murray Hill Cinemas
160 E. 34th St. (212-689-6548) • Cast Away; In the Mood for Love; Saving Silverman; Thirteen Days.

Clearview's Chelsea
260 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#597) • Before Night Falls; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Hannibal; Pollock; Snatch; Traffic.

Clearview's Chelsea West
333 W. 23rd St. (212-777-FILM#614) • Recess: School's Out; Saving Silverman.

Loews 19th St. East
890 Broadway, at 19th St. (212-50-LOEWS#858) • Down to Earth; Finding Forrester; Save the Last Dance; Sweet November; Thirteen Days; The Wedding Planner.

Loews Kips Bay Theatre
570 Second Ave. (212-505-6397#558) • Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Down to Earth; The Gift; Hannibal; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; The Pledge; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Snatch; Sweet November; Traffic; The Wedding Planner.

42nd–60th Streets

AMC Empire 25 Theatres
234 W. 42nd St., at Eighth Ave. (212-398-3939) • Almost Famous; Before Night Falls; Billy Elliot; Cast Away; Chocolat; Double Take; The Emperor's New Groove; Finding Forrester; Head Over Heels; Maléna; Miss Congeniality; Pollock; Quills; Recess: School's Out; Requiem for a Dream; Saving Silverman; State and Main; Sugar and Spice; Sweet November; Thirteen Days; The Wedding Planner; You Can Count On Me.

CC Cinemas 1, 2, 3
1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (212-753-6022) • Before Night Falls; Chocolat; Maléna.

CC Crown Gotham
969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (212-759-2262) • Thirteen Days.

CC Eastside Playhouse
919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (212-755-3020) • Billy Elliot.

The Other Festival of Lights

On February 22, the **17th Israel Film Festival** will kick off its two-week showcase with a screening of Joseph Cedar's *Time of Favor,* the official entry from Israel for this year's Academy Awards. The film stars Aki Avni (pictured) as a religious officer in the Israeli army whose life and job are threatened by a plan to bomb the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount. On opening night, Isabella Rossellini will present director Sidney Lumet with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his body of work (*Network, Prince of the City, The Pawnbroker*). If Joel Siegel weren't hosting, it'd be a perfect evening. Begins February 22.

Photograph by Yoni Hamenachem.

CC Sutton
205 E. 57th St. (212-759-1411) • O Brother, Where Art Thou?; Recess: School's Out.

Clearview's 59th Street East
239 E. 59th St. (212-777-FILM#615) • You Can Count On Me.

Clearview's Ziegfeld
141 W. 54th St. (212-777-FILM#602) • Hannibal.

CO Worldwide Cinemas
340 W. 50th St. (212-505-CINE#610) • Charlie's Angels; Dude, Where's My Car?; Meet the Parents; Proof of Life; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Vertical Limit; Wonder Boys.

Loews 42nd Street E Walk
42nd Street at Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#572) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Down to Earth; The Gift; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; Save the Last Dance; Snatch; Traffic; Valentine.

Loews Astor Plaza
44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (212-50-LOEWS#699) • Hannibal.

Loews Coronet
993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (212-505-CINE#608) • Finding Forrester; Sweet November.

Loews State
1540 Broadway, bet. 45th and 46th Sts. (212-50-LOEWS#901) • Gladiator; The Pledge; Shadow of the Vampire; Sing-a-long Sound of Music; What Women Want.

Paris Theatre
4 W. 58th St. (212-688-3800) • The House of Mirth.

61st Street and Above, East Side

CC 86th St. East
210 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#763) • Chocolat; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; Recess: School's Out; Sweet November.

Clearview's Beekman
1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (212-777-FILM#606) • In the Mood for Love.

Clearview's First & 62nd St.
400 E. 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#957) • Cast Away; The Gift; Hannibal; Pollock; Snatch.

Clearview's Park and 86th St.
125 E. 86th St. (212-777-FILM#604) • Cast Away; Thirteen Days.

Loews 72nd St. East
1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (212-50-LOEWS#704) • Traffic.

Loews New York Twin
1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (212-50-LOEWS#698) • Head Over Heels; The Pledge.

Loews Orpheum 7
1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (212-50-LOEWS#964) • Down to Earth; Hannibal; The Pledge; Save the Last Dance; Snatch; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

UA East
1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (212-249-5100) • Saving Silverman.

UA Gemini
1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (212-832-1670) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Saving Silverman; The Wedding Planner.

61st Street and Above, West Side

Clearview's 62nd and Broadway
1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (212-777-FILM#864) • You Can Count On Me.

Clearview's Metro Cinema
2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (212-777-FILM#609) • Down to Earth; Traffic.

Clearview's Olympia
2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (212-777-FILM#613) • Hannibal.

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas
30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (212-757-2280) • Before Night Falls; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Faithless; In the Mood for Love; Pollock; The Taste of Others.

Loews 84th Street
2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (212-50-LOEWS#701) • Down to Earth; Saving Silverman; Valentine; The Wedding Planner; What Women Want.

Magic Johnson Harlem USA
300 W. 125th St. (212-665-8733) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Double Take; Down to Earth; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Valentine.

New Coliseum
701 W. 181st St. (212-740-1545) • Double Take; Save the Last Dance; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Nova
3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (212-862-5728) • Double Take; Save the Last Dance; Valentine.

Sony Lincoln Square
1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (212-50-LOEWS#638) • Chocolat; Finding Forrester; The Gift; Hannibal; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; The Pledge; Recess: School's Out; Snatch; Sweet November; Thirteen Days; Traffic.

Bronx

Bay Plaza
2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (718-777-FILM#833) • Cast Away; Double Take; The Emperor's New Groove; Finding Forrester; Hannibal; Head Over Heels; The Pledge; Save the Last Dance; Sugar and Spice; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Concourse Plaza
214 E. 161th St. (718-588-8800) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Double Take; Down to Earth; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Whitestone
2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (718-409-9030) • Cast Away; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Double Take; Down to Earth; The Emperor's New Groove; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Saving Silverman; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Brooklyn

BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave. (718-623-2770) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; In the Mood for Love; The Decalogue. (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Brooklyn Heights
70 Henry St. (718-596-7070) • Call theater for showtimes.

Canarsie
9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (718-718-251-0700) • Head Over Heels; Save the Last Dance; Valentine.

Clearview's Cobble Hill
265 Court St. (718-596-9113) • Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Nico & Dani; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; Shadow of the Vampire.

CO Alpine
6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (718-777-FILM#580) • Call theater for showtimes.

CO Fortway
6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (718-777-FILM#578) • Call theater for showtimes.

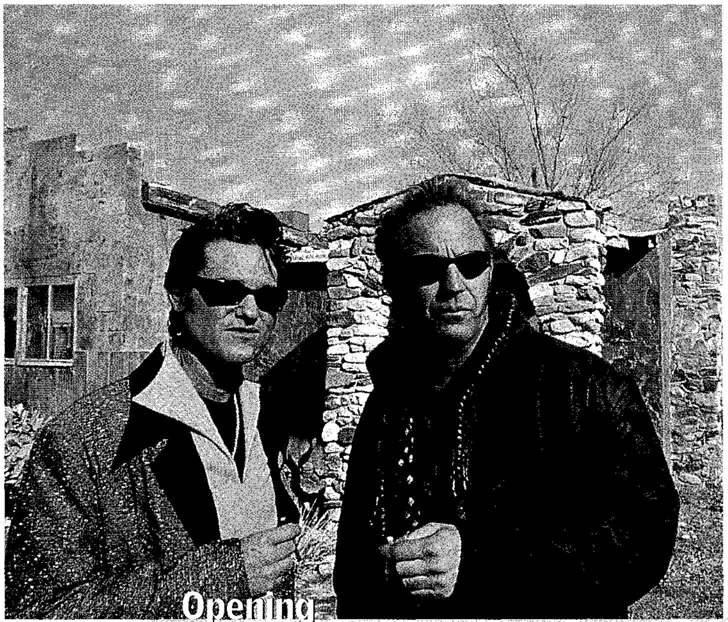
CO Kings Plaza
5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (718-777-FILM#579) • Call theater for showtimes.

CO Kingsway
946 Kings Hwy., at Coney Island Ave. (718-777-FILM#577) • Call theater for showtimes.

Kent Triplex
Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (718-338-3371) • Save the Last Dance; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Linden Boulevard Multiplex
Linden Blvd. and Eldert Lane (718-277-0303) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Double Take; Down to Earth; The Emperor's New Groove; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Save the Last Dance; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Pavilion
188 Prospect Park West (718-369-0838) • Before Night Falls; Down to Earth; The Gift; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Sweet November; Traffic; The Wedding Planner.



Opening

Return to Sender

We're not sure about Kevin Costner's sinking his teeth into the comic-thriller genre; in fact, we have our concerns when he's starring in *anything* that doesn't involve cleats. And the trailer for **3000 Miles to Graceland**—in which Costner happily throws a cigarette out of his convertible to cause a fiery conflagration—leaves us highly skeptical. Of course, we haven't even mentioned that Kurt Russell stars, or the fact that this film once again milks that whole Elvis impersonator–Las Vegas thing à la *Wild at Heart* and *Honeymoon in Vegas*. The hokey plot involves freewheeling crooks who dress as the King to escape the fuzz and make off with millions. So if we can't say anything good about this film, why are we writing about it at all? Because it looks better than *Monkeybone*. Begins February 23.

Photograph by Alan Markfield.

Festivals

Tales of the City

In the past five years, a squad of younger Mainland Chinese directors have been working outside the state-owned studio system, focusing their creative energies and cameras on gritty city life. Showcasing the best of these young auteurs, the Film Society of Lincoln Center presents **The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema in Transformation,** an eleven-film series whose highlights include *Postman (You chai),* He Jianjun's 1995 drama about a voyeuristic mailman who delights in reading other people's letters; Wang Quanan's *Lunar Eclipse*, starring Ya Nan (pictured) as a newlywed who falls in love with a mysterious minivan driver; and Ah Nian's *Call Me (Hu wo)*, a labyrinthine narrative about lonely city dwellers desperately trying (and failing) to connect with one another. Begins February 23.

Ridgewood
55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (718-821-5993) • Double Take; Head Over Heels; Save the Last Dance; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

UA Marboro
6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (718-232-4000) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Hannibal; Saving Silverman; Traffic.

UA Movies at Sheepshead Bay
3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (718-615-1700) • Cast Away; Down to Earth; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Snatch; Sweet November; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Queens

Centre Sunnyside
42-17 Queens Blvd. (718-361-6869) • The Gift; Head Over Heels; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Save the Last Dance; Sugar and Spice; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Cinemart
106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (718-261-2244) • Maléna; Nico and Dani; Save the Last Dance; Sugar and Spice; What Women Want.

CO Cinema City
183-15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (718-777-FILM#592) • Call theater for showtimes.

CO Fresh Meadows
Eastbound Service Rd. at 190th St. (718-777-FILM#619) • Call theater for showtimes.

College Point Multiplex
28-55 Ulmer St., Whitestone (718-886-4900) • Cast Away; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Down to Earth; The Emperor's New Groove; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Saving Silverman; Sweet November; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Jackson Triplex
82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (718-478-6777) • Head Over Heels; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Kaufman Astoria Cinema
38th St. at 35th Ave. (718-786-2020) • Cast Away; Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Double Take; The Gift; Hannibal; Saving Silverman; Shadow of the Vampire; Snatch; Sugar and Spice; Traffic; Valentine; What Women Want.

Kew Gardens Cinemas
81-05 Lefferts Blvd. (718-441-9835) • Billy Elliot; Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas; The House of Mirth; The Invisible Circus; O Brother, Where Art Thou?; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Shadow of the Vampire; The Wedding Planner.

Main Street Cinemas
72-66 Main St. (718-263-4828) • Head Over Heels; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Save the Last Dance; Sugar and Spice; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

North Shore Towers
27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (718-229-7702) • Billy Elliot; Left Luggage; Miss Congeniality; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie.

Plaza
103-14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (718-639-0012) • The Pledge; Save the Last Dance.

Sony Bay Terrace
211-01 26th Ave., at Bell Blvd., Bayside (718-777-FILM#712) • Call theater for showtimes.

Sony Elmwood
57-02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (718-777-FILM#733) • Call theater for showtimes.

UA Astoria
28-60 Steinway St. (718-726-1279) • Down to Earth; Groove; Head Over Heels; Save the Last Dance; Sweet November; The Wedding Planner.

UA Brandon Cinema
70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (718-544-1020) • Sweet November; Traffic.

UA Crossbay
94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (718-848-1738) • Down to Earth; Rugrats in Paris: The Movie; Saving Silverman; Valentine.

UA Crossbay II
92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (718-641-5330) • Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Sweet November; The Wedding Planner.

UA Midway
108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (718-544-5545) • Cast Away; Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; The Gift; Hannibal; The Pledge; Snatch; Valentine.

UA Movies at Bayside
38-39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (718-225-7711) • Down to Earth; Save the Last Dance; Saving Silverman; The Wedding Planner.

UA Movieworld
242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (718-423-7200) • Cast Away; Down to Earth; Hannibal; The Pledge; Recess: School's Out; Sweet November; Thirteen Days; The Wedding Planner.

Staten Island

Atrium
680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (718-317-8300) • Cast Away; Chocolat; Down to Earth; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Saving Silverman; Sweet November; Traffic; The Wedding Planner.

UA Hylan Plaza
107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (718-351-0805) • Down to Earth; Hannibal; Sweet November; The Wedding Planner.

UA Movies at Staten Island
141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (718-983-9600) • Cast Away; Chocolat; Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon; Down to Earth; The Gift; Hannibal; Recess: School's Out; Save the Last Dance; Saving Silverman; Sweet November; Traffic; Valentine; The Wedding Planner.

Museums, Societies, Etc.

Anthology Film Archives
32 Second Ave. (212-505-5110); $8. • 2/20: *Yom Yom (Day After Day)* (1998). 2/21: *I Was Made to Love Her: The Double Dutch Documentary* (2000). 2/22: *Yom Yom (Day After Day)*. 2/23: *Esther* (1985); *Berlin Jerusalem* (1989). 2/24: *American Mythologies* (1981); *Field Diary* (1982); *Songs 1-14* (1964). 2/25: *Wadi, Ten Years Later* (1991); *In the Valley of Wupper* (1993). 2/26: *A House in Jerusalem* (1998); *Kadosh* (1999).

BAM Rose Cinemas
30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn (718-623-2770). • 2/20: "Three by James Ivory." *Howards End* (1992). 2/21: "Cinemachat." *Odd Man Out* (1947). 2/22: "Behind the Screen with Melvin." *Bellyful* (2000). 2/23-2/25: "Pressman: Pop Fantasy." *True Stories* (1986). 2/24: *The Crow* (1994); *Conan the Barbarian* (1982). 2/25: *Sisters* (1973); *Phantom of the Paradise* (1974). 2/26: "The Criminal Cinema of François Ozon." *Water Drops on Burning Rocks* (1999).

Film Society of Lincoln Center
(The Walter Reade Theater) 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (212-875-5600); $8.50, $5 for members, $4.50 for seniors, $4 for "Movies for Kids." • Beginning 2/23: "The Urban Generation: Chinese Cinema in Transformation." 2/23: *Rainclouds Over Wushan* (1996); *Postman* (1995). 2/24: *Xiou Wu* (1997); *Lunar Eclipse* (1999).

Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480); free with $10 admission, $6.50 for students and seniors, no admission fee for children 16 and under when accompanied by an adult. • 2/20: *Three by Hal Hartley*; *La Chinoise* (1967); *Fuzzy Logic* (1998); *The Brothers McMullen* (1995); *Poetry in Motion Pictures*. 2/22: *Greetings From Africa* (1994); *The Sticky Fingers of Time* (1997); *Comrades* (1970). 2/23: *The Old Place* (1999); *The Golden Boat* (1990); *Greetings From Africa*; *Three by Hal Hartley*. 2/24: *Milhouse: A White Comedy* (1971); *The Old Place*; *A Face of War* (1968); *Lucia* (1969). 2/25: *The Lovely Month of May* (1963); *The Olive Trees of Justice* (1961); *The Battle of Algiers* (1965). 2/26: *The Earth Sings* (1933); *Landscape* (2000).

The Screening Room
54 Varick St. (212-334-2100); $9 ($6 for Sunday-brunch patrons). • Beginning 2/23: "The Films of Ridley Scott." 2/23: *Alien* (1979). 2/24: *Blade Runner* (1982). 2/25: *Thelma & Louise* (1991). 2/26: *Black Rain* (1989).

YWCA Cine-Club
610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (212-735-9717); $6 members, $7 nonmembers. • Through 7/29: "A Treasury of French Films." 1/24-1/25: *The Strange Ones (Les Enfants Terribles)* (1950).

Photograph courtesy of the Film Society of Lincoln Center.

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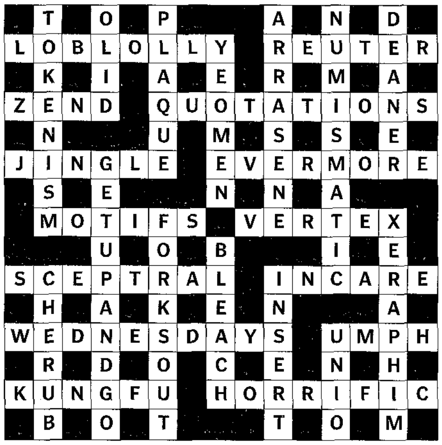
Solutions to last week's puzzles



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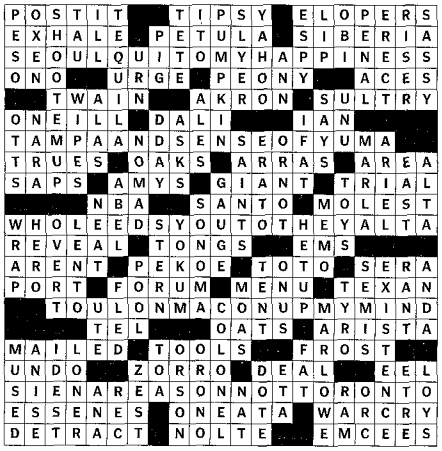

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Trailers

A CRAZY LIFE Angelina Jolie has agreed to star in New Regency's *Life, or Something Like It,* in which she'll play a disillusioned reporter whose existence is turned around after an encounter with a homeless prophet; **Stephen Herek** (*Mr. Holland's Opus*) will direct, and **John Davis** will produce; shooting starts in April.

DRUG TREATMENT Miramax has already bought the rights to **Alan Glynn**'s forthcoming novel *Dark Fields,* from which *Tigerland* writer **Ross Klavan** will pen an adaptation; the British novel is a thriller about a down-and-out writer from New York who discovers a powerful drug that makes him successful beyond his wildest dreams—that is, until his supply runs out.

HORROR MOVIE John Cusack will star in *Hoffman* for Alliance Atlantis Pictures; the historical film, under first-time director **Menno Meyjes**, follows the relationship between a young Adolf Hitler and the art teacher who neglected to nurture his growth. Did this real-life disappointment have anything to do with Hitler's subsequent peculiarities? **Andras Hamori** will produce.

TEACHER'S PET Universal's *The Palace Thief* will begin shooting later this spring, and **Kevin Kline** has agreed to star as a teacher at an elite prep school who develops a lifelong relationship with an especially troubled student; **Andy Karsch** will produce the drama for Beacon Pictures, and **Michael Hoffman** (*One Fine Day*) will direct; the role of the student Kline befriends has not yet been cast.

SARA CARDACE

Photographs: top, by Robin Platzer/Twin Images; bottom, by Henry McGee/Globe Photos.

Opening

Three's Company

The elegantly wasted Alan Cumming (pictured) once proclaimed to the *Advocate* that he would be a "frolicky pansexual sex symbol for the new millennium." He's trying to live up to that claim—and his legendarily sleazy role as *Cabaret*'s emcee, in which he practically obliterated the memory of Joel Grey—by co-starring in Noël Coward's naughty little ménage à trois comedy **Design for Living**, opposite fellow Tony winner Jennifer Ehle, and Dominic West. The threesome will get it on at the Roundabout's American Airlines Theatre, which ultimately raises the question: Do they all get membership in the Mile High Club? In previews for a March 15 opening. (See "Broadway.")

Broadway

Previews and Openings

A Class Act
The Manhattan Theatre Club's successful tribute to the life and music of that singular sensation, *A Chorus Line* lyricist Edward Kleban, transfers to Broadway with an expanded cast and design. $25–$75. Tues.–Sat at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/11 opening. • Ambassador Theatre, 219 W. 49th St. (212-239-6200).

Design For Living
Alan Cumming and Dominic West seek the love of Jennifer Ehle in Noel Coward's 1932 ménage à trois comedy, directed by Joe Mantello. $40–65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Some early curtains. In previews for a 3/15 opening. • American Airlines Theatre, 227 W. 42nd St. (212-719-1300).

Judgment at Nuremburg
Based on the second trials of the Nazi war criminals, Abby Mann's new drama is directed by John Tillinger (*Comic Potential, The Price, Night Must Fall*). Maximillian Schell and George Grizzard star. $29.50–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Longacre Theatre, 220 W. 48th St. (212-239-6280).

Now Playing

Aida
The epic musical about the love affair between a Nubian slave and a cute Egyptian. $25–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Palace Theatre, 1554 Broadway, at 47th St. (212-307-4747).

Annie Get Your Gun
Reba McEntire plays Annie Oakley, the sharp-tongued, sharpshootin' gal from Cincinnati who eclipses her lover in Buffalo Bill's traveling Wild West Show. Irving Berlin did the lyrics and score; Peter Stone updated the book. $85. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. • Marquis Theatre, 1535 Broadway, bet. 45th and 46th Sts. (212-307-4100).

Beauty and the Beast
Sarah Litzinger blanches and blushes as the fair maiden; Steve Blanchard roars and repents as the Beast. $25–$85. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (212-307-4747).

Cabaret
The Roundabout is to be roundly applauded for recreating Sam Mendes's 1993 London production, even if with some diminishment. (Simon: 3/30/98.) Now starring Gina Gershon, Matthew Greer, and Matt McGrath (*Hedwig*). $25–$90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. Opened: 3/19/98. • Studio 54, 254 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

Chicago
It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of this musical to Broadway, but since it's about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Every bosom, pelvis, and long leg is in business to keep the women in the audience identifying, the men panting. (Simon: 11/30/98.) Bebe Neuwirth stars, opposite Belle Calaway through 3/1. $20–$85. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 11/14/96. • Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Contact
This is billed as "a dance play by Susan Stroman and John Weidman," with what little there is of a play mostly by Weidman and the variety and plenitude of the dancing all Stroman. Deborah Yates triumphs as the girl in yellow. (Simon: 10/25/99.) $55–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

The Dinner Party
Neil Simon's unabashedly contrived new comedy features three men, two of their ex-wives, and a mysterious man who has locked them all in a Paris dining room together. Henry Winkler and John Ritter star. $45–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Dirty Blonde
Kathy Najimy takes over for actress-playwright Claudia Shear in this delightful play about two Gotham singles who meet at the grave of Mae West, sampling delicious vignettes from the life of the woman who said, "I'm no angel, but I've spread my wings a bit." $65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Wed. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Fosse
A tribute to the late choreographer-director, whose swivelin'-hips-and-bowler-hat aesthetic came roaring back with the revival of *Chicago*. Ben Vereen stars, through 4/1. $65–$80. Mon., Tues., and Thurs.– Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Broadhurst Theatre, 235 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

The Full Monty
The musical adaptation of the 1997 film about desperate, destitute men who have nothing to lose but their underwear. Music and lyrics by David Yazbek; book by Terrence McNally; directed by Jack O'Brien. $31–$86. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Eugene O'Neill Theatre, 230 W. 49th St. (212-239-6200).

Jane Eyre
This musical, with contributions from John Carid, Scott Schwartz, John Napier, and Paul Gordon, received very mixed reviews at the La Jolla Playhouse—but broke box-office records. $50–$90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Brooks Atkinson Theatre, 256 W. 47th St. (212-307-4100).

Kiss Me, Kate
With a score jammed with some of the best-known theater songs ever written, it's no wonder each generation has rediscovered this gem since its 1948 Broadway premiere. Now Burke Moses and Marin Mazzie interpret Cole Porter's feuding couple—two actors who play the Shrew's Kate and Petruchio in a play-within-the-musical. $26–$86. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Les Misérables
What a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest of eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) $20–$85. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 3/12/87. • Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

The Lion King
This spectacle rightfully earns that most abused of epithets: *magical*. (Simon: 12/1/97.) $20–$90. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened:

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where discount tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0833.

Photograph by Henry Leutwyler.

My Life As a Dogeater

In 1990, **Jessica Hagedorn**'s raucous National Book Award nominee *Dogeaters* introduced readers to a pop-culture-happy Marcos-era Philippines that most readers had never experienced. Described by a *Times* reviewer as a "mural of words," her novel roped in a riot of characters—politicians, drag queens, television stars, heroes, hustlers—all talking, jibing, ranting, and joking in a spray of Spanish, Tagalog, and Filipino English. Understandably, the more linear constraints of the stage proved a tough fit. "I streamlined it as best I could," she says, "but I didn't want to take one plot line and reduce it to that, because I didn't think it would be fair to the novel." Instead, she says she reworked her book into a grand-scale "portrait of a culture at one time," an evocative depiction of the Philippines in 1982 "with a few flashbacks into the fifties." Fifteen actors (cast, pictured) play more than 30 roles, and the novel's protagonist, Rio, now takes a more active role in a plot that unites those diverse archetypes to the beat of a rowdy soundtrack. In fact, Hagedorn, who fronted a rock band in New York for ten years, promises that indigenous Filipino drumming and pop music will be complemented by the likes of David Byrne, Grace Jones, and Nat "King" Cole. "Between the Philippines and the U.S.," Hagedorn says, "there's a profound love-hate relationship and a bond. That's very complicated and fascinating to me, so I feel like this play hopefully isn't just seen as some exotic glimpse into a faraway land—that's not it at all." In previews for a March 4 opening at the Public Theater. (See "Off Broadway.") L.H.

11/13/97. • New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (212-307-4747).

The Music Man
Back in 1957, Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* made a star out of Robert Preston; the current revival should do the same for Rebecca Luker, who gives a performance as detailed, nuanced, and cherishable as ever turned a performer into a legend. Susan Stroman's production has other assets as well. (Simon: 5/8/00.) $40–$90. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Neil Simon Theatre, 250 W. 52nd. St. (212-307-4100).

The Phantom of the Opera
Unlike *Cats,* Andrew Lloyd Webber's other blockbuster refuses to give up the ghost. $20–$85. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. • Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Proof
David Auburn's *Proof* is what *Copenhagen* ought to be: a play about scientists whose science matters less than their humanity. Here, those of us who want their dramatic characters to be real people need not feel excluded. Robert, a world-famous mathematician who went crazy; Catherine, his mathematically brilliant but too-depressed-to-work daughter; Hal, a young math teacher going through Robert's hundred-plus confused notebooks; and Claire, Robert's older daughter and a successful actuary, are above all fascinating individuals. As directed by Daniel Sullivan, the performances are perfect. As for Mary-Louise Parker, her Catherine is a performance of genius. (Simon: 6/5/00.) $24–$69. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Walter Kerr Theatre, 219 W. 48th St. (212-239-6200).

Rent
The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. $35–$80. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (212-307-4100).

Riverdance
The Irish return. $25–$80. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (212-307-4100).

The Rocky Horror Show
Christopher Ashley (*Jeffrey*) directs a surreal cast in Frank N. Furter's naughty pad. Lifelong rocker Joan Jett makes her Broadway debut opposite *Rent* star Daphne Rubin-Vega, stage vet Tom Hewitt, comics Dick Cavett and Lea De Laria, and Alice Ripley of *Side Show* (very appropriate). $75. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9:45, Sun. at 2 and 7. • Circle in the Square, 1633 Broadway (212-239-6200).

The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe
Lily Tomlin returns, along with an astonishing assortment of characters led by Trudy, a homeless lady and "creative consultant to these aliens from outer space" who knows that reality is really just "a collective hunch." The solo show that makes other solo shows look like, well, solo shows, it's written and directed by Jane Wagner, Tomlin's longtime collaborator and partner. As Trudy says, "I'm glad I got delusions of grandeur. It makes me feel a lot better about myself." $50–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (212-239-6200).

Seussical
The struggling but optimistic musical gets a much-needed lift from Rosie O'Donnell. $50–$85. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. • Richard Rodgers Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. (212-307-4100).

The Tale of the Allergist's Wife
Who would have expected from a campy downtown playwright a nicely structured, intelligently funny, satirically relevant uptown comedy? In Charles Busch's new play, the retired but still overactive allergist Dr. Ira Taub is married to Marjorie, an immobilized nervous wreck since the death of her therapist. If you seek an ideal cast, look no further. Linda Lavin, for whom the admiring Busch wrote Marjorie as, he says, a kind of King Lear, is that and more: Lady Macbeth, Willy Loman, Lydia Languish, and, better yet, herself at her dizzying best. (Simon: 3/13/00.) Also starring Tony Roberts and Michele Lee. $30–$70. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. • Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Bobbi Boland
It's been twenty years since she was named Miss Florida, but when a new girl comes into town, Bobbi has to defend her crown. $30–$40. Wed.–Mon. at 8, Sat. at 3, Sun. at 7. In previews for a 3/1 opening. • Arclight Theatre, 152 West 71st St. (212-279-4200).

Boy Gets Girl
A strange tale of stalking in the city by controversial playwright Rebecca Gilman (*Spinning Into Butter*). $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. In previews for a 2/20 opening. • MTC Stage 1 at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

Dogeaters
In Jessica Hagedorn's new adaptation of her prize-winning novel, politicians, hustlers and beauty queens all mingle in 1980's Philippines. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7. In previews for a 3/4 opening. • Joseph Papp Public Theater, 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

High Dive
A frantic new comedy written and performed by Leslie Ayvazian (*Nine Armenians, Plan Day*). $20. Thurs.–Sat. and Mon. at 8, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 2/26 opening. Through 3/25. • MCC Theater, 120 W. 28th St. (212-727-7765).

I Will Bear Witness
This world premiere brings the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a German Jew whose life was spared during Hitler's reign, to life. $15–$25. Call for schedule. Previews begin 2/25 for a 3/11 opening. • Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (212-677-4210).

The Idiot
An adaptation of Dostoyevsky's classic kicks off this new theater's first season. $40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 2/21 for a 2/28 opening. • Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, 55 Mercer St. (212-239-6200).

If It Was Easy
A Broadway producer and a gossip columnist concoct a musical about Ol' Blue Eyes and get the mob on their side in this new comedy from Stewart F. Lane and Ward Morehouse III. $55–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/7 opening. • Douglas Fairbanks Theatre, 432 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Leaving Queens
Kate Moira Ryan's new musical drama about an Irish-

Photograph by Michal Daniel.

American woman and her family. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Previews begin 2/25 for a 3/1 opening. • Women's Project Theatre, 424 West 55th St. (212-239-6200).

Lobby Hero
The winner of last year's Sundance Grand Jury Prize for *You Can Count on Me*, playwright Kenneth Lonergan (*Waverly Gallery, This Is Our Youth*) returns to the stage. Mark Brokaw (*This Is Our Youth, How I Learned to Drive*) directs a sticky story about a security guard, his supervisor, and two cops who are all trapped in a confounding moral situation. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 8. In previews for a 3/13 opening. • Playwrights Horizons' Anne G. Wilder Theater, 416 W. 42nd St. (212-279-4200).

Rashomon
Pan Asian Rep presents a new adaptation of the Ryunosuke Akutagawa story that was made into a classic film by Akira Kurosawa. $30–$45. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 2/21 opening. • West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St. (212-279-4200).

Saved
Originally banned after its London premiere in 1965, Edward Bond's play, about life in a working-class London suburb returns to New York. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 2/25 opening. • American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

A Skull in Connemara
The Roundabout Theatre Company presents the second episode of the "Leenane" trilogy by the talented playwright Martin McDonagh (*The Beauty Queen of Leenane*). $55. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 2/22 opening. • Gramercy Theatre, 127 E. 23rd St. (212-307-4100).

The Subject Was Roses
The revival of Frank D. Gilroy's Pulitzer Prize-winning drama stars Jean Cocteau Rep regulars Craig Smith and Elise Stone. $15–$40. Call for schedule. In previews for a 2/24 opening. • Jean Cocteau Repertory, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

Suburb
In this musical comedy, a young couple contemplates abandoning the city's hustle and bustle. $45–$50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun., at 2:30. In previews for a 3/1 opening. • St. Peter's Church, Citigroup Center, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. (212-239-6200).

Summer Cyclone
Nela Wagman's new drama. $15. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. Previews begin 2/21 for a 2/26 opening. • Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 W. 52nd St. (212-247-4982).

Ten Unknowns
In the latest offering from Jon Robin Baitz, Donald Sutherland plays a seventy-something painter whose hermitage in Mexico is disturbed by three visitors: Justin Kirk, Julianna Margulies, and Denis O'Hare. Daniel Sullivan (*Proof, Dinner With Friends*) directs. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 8., Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/8 opening. • Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (212-239-6200).

Urban Zulu Mambo
A collection of short works by Kia Corthron, Suzan-Lori Parks, Ntozake Shange, and Regina Taylor exploring issues like homelessness and love, as performed by author-actress Taylor. $47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 2/25 opening. • Peter Norton Space, 555 W. 42nd St. (212-244-7529).

Now Playing

American Rhapsody
A new musical revue of Gershwin's works directed by Ruth Leon and starring KT Sullivan and Mark Nadler. $40–$55. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. • Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (212-239-6200).

Blue Man Group: Tubes
Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Wildly inventive, and appropriate for just about everyone—kids, adults, foreigners, haters and lovers of performance art. $45–$55. Tues.–Thurs. at 8, Fri. at 7 and 10, Sat. at 4, 7, and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. • Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (212-254-4370).

Caravane
Herbin Van Cayseele and the musicians and dancers who make up Urban Tap present a jam session performance complete with break dancing and African drums. $10–$25. Call for schedule; through 2/25. • New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

Cary and Gallo: What If We Did This?
Ted Sullivan directs the comic duo Cary and Gallo, in a production written by several late-night-television writers. $30. Mon. at 8. Through 3/15. • SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-239-6200).

Cellini
Moonstruck screenwriter John Patrick Shanley wrote and directs this play about larger-than-life Florentine sculptor and ladies' man Benvenuto Cellini. $30–$50. Tues. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Wed. at 7, Sun. at 3. • Second Stage Theatre, 307 W. 43rd St. (212-246-4422).

The Cherry Orchard
Joseph Hardy returns to Theatre 80 to direct the Pearl Theatre Company's new production of Chekhov's classic drama. $28–$35. Tues. at 7, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sun. at 2. Through 2/25. • Theatre 80, 80 St. Marks Pl. (212-598-9802).

De La Guarda
A show that's part carnival, part rock concert, and almost entirely airborne. Perfect for theatrical thrill-seekers who don't mind breaking a sweat. $37.50–$45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Fri. at 10:30, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. • Daryl Roth Theatre, 20 Union Square E., at 15th St. (212-239-6200).

The Devil's Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith
The legendary singer gets the biographical treatment in this new musical. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Theatre 3, 311 W. 43rd St. (212-279-4200).

Dido, Queen of Carthage
Marlowe's rarely performed first play. $15. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. Through 2/24. • Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. (212-358-3657).

Dinner With Friends
Karen and Gabe, international food writers, are giving a dinner for their friends Beth and Tom, which Tom doesn't attend. It emerges from the heartbroken Beth that her husband has left her for another woman. There is skillful construction here, as well as keen psychological insight. (Simon: 11/22/99.) Winner of the Pulitzer Prize. $30–$65. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7:30. • Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave. (212-239-6200).

The Donkey Show
A fantastic, loose disco-musical adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with even looser morals. Very fun. $39. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 10:30. • El Flamingo, 547 W. 21st St. (212-307-4100).

Downhearted Blues—The Life and Music of Bessie Smith
Tony- and Grammy-winning Jennifer Holliday wrote and stars in this musical one-act chronicling the life of Bessie Smith for the Illyria Theatre. $30. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7. • Chelsea Playhouse, 125 W. 22nd St. (212-561-9553).

End of the World Party
A new comedy about gay men who share a Fire Island summer house by multiple Emmy winner Chuck Ranberg. $45–$49.50. Mon.–Wed. and Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • 47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. (212-239-6200).

Excuse Me, I'm Talking!
The Jewish Rep presents Judy Chaikin's autobiographical one-woman show of songs and stories about her life in Jewish America. $40–$45. Tues.–Thurs. and Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2, Sun. at 7. • Duke Theater, 229 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

The Fantasticks
The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $36.50–$39. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. • Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (212-674-3838).

Forbidden Broadway 2001: A Spoof Odyssey
Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof. $49.50. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8:15, Sat at 2:30, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30. Food and drink available, optional. • Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (212-239-6200).

Opening

Cannonball Run

In her frantic, comic one-woman show, **High Dive**, Leslie Ayvazian (pictured) is alternately standing, crouching, or prone on a diving board twelve feet above a pool in sweltering Athens, Greece. From this lonely, awkward position, she relates a sweeping life story with the help of 34 audience members whose few but well-timed words—read from scripts handed out at the play's onset—propel the action. The real question here isn't whether Ayvazian jumps but rather how the hell she got up on that board in the first place. The answer involves natural disasters, an unnaturally disastrous visit to *The $25,000 Pyramid*, and a bizarre encounter with Mickey Rooney. In previews for a February 26 opening. (See "Off Broadway.")

JADA YUAN

Photograph by Dixie Sheridan.

Opening

Masterpiece Theater

The brand-new Manhattan Ensemble Theater (MET) kicks off its first season this month with Dostoyevsky's **The Idiot** (starring Roxanna Hope and Triney Sandoval, pictured), adapted and directed by artistic director and founder David Fishelson—the first of a very long line, we hope, of classics the company will adapt for the stage. So slacker students now have one more last-minute option: If someone else rents the last copy of the video the night before midterms, they can just head downtown. Previews begin February 21. (See "Off Broadway.")

Force Continuum
New production of the Atlantic Theater Company about three generations of black officers of the NYPD. Written by Kia Corthron and directed by Michael John Garcés. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (212-239-6200).

4 Guys Named José . . . and Una Mujer Named Maria
Four Latino guys fight to put together a song-and-dance revue that confounds stereotypes. $37.50–$47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Blue Angel Theatre, 323 W. 44th St. (212-239-6200).

Fresa y Chocolate (Strawberry and Chocolate)
A comedy about the confrontation between a gay artist and a revolutionary purist. $30–$40. Call for schedule. • Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. (212-889-2850).

Fully Committed
For the price of an entrée, Becky Mode serves up all the splendors and miseries of restaurant life prepared to a fare-thee-well. Smartly directed by Nicholas Martin, this play is a day in the life of Sam, the young man and struggling actor who works the reservation phones in a four-star restaurant where table 31 seems to be the ne plus ultra of socio-gastronomic achievement. (Simon: 1/17/00.) Now starring Christopher Fitzgerald (*Saturday Night*). $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (212-239-6200).

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change
They're here. They're straight. Get used to it. It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue is about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love. $49.50–$55. Mon., Tues., Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 8/1/96. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

The Importance of Being Oscar
Niall Buggy (*The Weir*) stars in this new production of Micheál MacLiammóir's portrait of Oscar Wilde. $35–$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. (212-727-2737).

Isn't It Romantic
Worth Street Theater stages Wendy Wasserstein's 1983 comedy, directed by Jeff Cohen. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. Through 3/25. • Tribeca Playhouse, 111 Reade St. (212-206-1515).

Late Nite Catechism
Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school-teaching nun. $40. Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Let A Hundred Flowers Bloom
David Zellnik's new comedy. $15. Tues.–Sat. at 8. • Center Stage, 48 W. 21st St.

Living in the Wind
Michael Bradford's romantic drama about two former slaves. $35-$40. Mon. and Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • American Place Theater, 111 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Maybe, Baby It's You
Playwright-performers Shari Simpson and Charlie Shanian play eleven couples in this romantic comedy. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Wed. at 2, Sat. at 10. • Theater at St. Luke's, 308 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

Murdered by the Mob
Interactive off-line entertainment. $55. Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 7. • Arno Ristorante, 141 W. 38th St. (800-687-3374).

Naked Boys Singing
Just like a musical revue, but without pants. $45–$65. Mon., Wed.–Fri., and Sun. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3. • Actor's Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. So. (212-239-6200).

Now That Communism Is Dead, My Life Feels Empty
Richard Foreman (*Bad Boy Nietzsche*) directs Tony Torn and Jay Smith as two ex-radical hipsters who just don't belong in a post-Marxist world. $15. Tues. and Fri.–Sun. at 8. • Ontological Theatre at St. Mark's Church, 131 E. 10th St. (212-533-4650).

Our Sinatra
Kurt Stamm directs this tribute to Ol' Blue Eyes, now transferred from a successful run at the Algonquin Hotel. $50–$100. Mon.-Wed., Fri. and Sun. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. • Reprise Room at Dylan's, 245 W. 54th St. (212-239-6200).

P.S. 69
Gay substitute teacher by day, exotic dancer by night: Susan Jeremy stars in this comedy about her experiences in a New York public school. $15. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 5. Through 2/25. • Walker Space, 46 Walker St. (212-279-4200).

Paradise Island
Lynn Cohen and Adrienne Shelly star as a mother and daughter on a 24-hour Caribbean gambling getaway. $25–$35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • New Group/Theatre @ St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. (212-279-4200).

Pete 'n' Keely
If you can approach this pocket musical with an open mindlessness, you can have a rattling good time. A 1968 TV studio presents a live telecast meant to reconcile and reinstate an estranged husband-and-wife team on the order of Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme. James Hindman's pastiche book is a spirited takeoff on the fifties and sixties entertainers' acts and lives. Mark Waldrop has directed with sauciness and gusto. George Dvorsky and Sally Mayes sing, dance, and spar to comic perfection. (Simon: 1/8/01). Costumes by Bob Mackie. $35–$55. Tues–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200).

The Play About the Baby
Tony winner Marian Seldes (*A Delicate Balance*) and Brian Murray star in Edward Albee's first new play since *Three Tall Women,* a mysterious drama about a couple of young new parents whose lives are invaded by an older, less innocent pair. $25–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3, Sun. at 7. • Century Center for the Performing Arts, 111 E. 15th St. (212-239-6200).

Race
Austrian playwright Ferdinand Bruckner's 1933 drama tracks the impact of the Nazi uprising on a group of German medical students. $25-$40. Tues.–Sat. at 8. Sat. and Sun. at 2. Through 3/11. • Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (212-677-4210).

Resident Alien
American premiere of Tim Fountain's "fully authorized dramatization" of the late Quentin Crisp's life and work, directed by Mike Bradwell and starring Bette Bourne as the "Naked Civil Servant" himself. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 3, Sun. at 2 and 7. • New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (212-460-5475).

Sitting Pretty
A helpless, jobless middle-aged woman finds solace as a nude model in the American premiere of a drama by heralded young British playwright Amy Rosenthal. $15–$19. Wed. and Thurs at 7, Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3. Through 3/11. • Hypothetical Theatre Company, 344 E. 14th St. (212-206-1515).

Stomp
As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show. $29.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 2/27/94. • Orpheum, 126 Second Ave. (212-477-2477).

Strictly Personal
A comedy about dating and personals by Jake Feinberg. $45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. • Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (212-239-6200).

The Syringa Tree
Pamela Gien plays 28 characters in a brilliant solo show about a young girl who tries to come to terms with life in sixties South Africa. It's as surprising and impredictable tale of family love and loss amid the often reckless violence of Apartheid. $47.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. • Playhouse 91, 316 E. 91st St. (212-307-4100).

Te Juro, Juana Que Tango Ganas (I Swear to You Jane, I Have an Itch for You)
Comedy of manners "in the style of Molière" by Emilio Carbadallido. $30–$40. Call for schedule. • Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. (212-889-2850).

Theater of Light
The return of "light artist" Rudi Stern's "visual fantasia," which features thousands of hand-painted images combined with light and music. Stern is a visual maestro and pioneer in an overlooked field that's wowed and won over skeptical converts for decades. Don't miss him. $20. Wed. and Sun. at 8, Thurs.–Sat. at 8 and 10. • Flamboyan Theatre, 107 Suffolk St. (212-279-4200).

Photograph by Carol Rosegg.

Time and Again
A new musical version of Jack Finney's time-travel romance. $40. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. • MTC's Stage II at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212).

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding
A wedding and reception, with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. $67.50–$80. Thurs.–Sun. at 7, Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88. • St. Luke's Church, 308 W. 46th St. and Vinnie Black's Coliseum, Hotel Edison, 221 W. 46th St. (212-239-6200).

The Vagina Monologues
Eve Ensler's ode to fannyboos, nappy dugouts, twats, etc., returns for a second coming. What was once Ensler's one-woman show is now performed by trios of actresses. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 5, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. • Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (212-239-6200).

Vieques
Set on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, this new drama tracks the life of a local family in the fifties, as the United States began its military exercises. The playwright, Jorge González, is the recent winner of the 2000 Nuestras Voces playwriting contest. Call for schedule. • Gramercy Arts Theatre, 138 E. 27th St. (212-889-2850).

Off-Off Broadway

The Abduction Project
A new work about alien encounters in suburbia. $12–$15. Mon. and Wed.–Sun. at 8:30. Opens 2/24. • HERE, 145 Sixth Ave. (212-647-0202).

Edufa
The U.S. premiere of Ghanaian author Efua T. Sutherland's drama. $12–$15. Wed.–Sun. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Through 3/4. • Grand Theatre at the Producer's Club, 358 W. 44th St. (212-279-4200).

Mercurius
Playwright and director John Jahnke (*Lola Montez in Bavaria*) returns. $15. Fri.–Sun. at 7. • HERE, 145 Sixth Ave. (212-647-0202).

Monday Night Magic
Abracadabra. $25–$27.50. Mon. at 8. • Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (212-307-4100).

Mono
Steven Tannenbaum directs an inventive improvisatory play set in a bar. $12. Thurs.–Sat. at 8. • Surf Reality, 172 Allen St. (212-358-3447).

Night and Day
Tom Stoppard's comedy. $20–$40. Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3, some Weds. at 8. Through 3/22. • Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery (212-677-0060).

Off the Rack: Cruelty in Retail
Comedy of consumerism. $10. Mon. at 8. Through 2/26. • Red Room, 85 E. 4th St. (212-539-7686).

See Bob Run
In Canadian playwright Daniel MacIvor's drama, Bob (the terrific Susan O'Connor) hitchhikes her way eastward in search of her father, telling tragic, semi-autobiographical fairy tales to anyone who will listen. $12–$15. Thur.–Sat. at 8. Through 3/3. • The Red Room, 85 East 4th St. (212-539-7686).

6
Two cycles of short plays. $10. Thurs.–Sat. at 8. • Axis Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. (212-807-9300).

Three Seconds in the Key
Obie-award winner Deb Margolin's new play deals with illness, recovery, and devotion to the New York Knicks. $15. Thurs.–Sun. at 7:30. Through 2/25. • P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (212-477-5288).

Up Your Ass
Valerie Solanas's long lost 1965 comedy. $20. Wed.–Sun. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 11, 2/25 at 4. • P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (212-477-5288).

Valerie Shoots Andy
An investigation—and satirical re-creation—of the 1968 attempted assassination of Andy Warhol. $10–$15. Thurs.–Sun. at 8, some Suns. at 3. Through 3/4. • Present Company Theatorium, 198 Stanton St. (212-420-8877).

Edited by Edith Newhall

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

David Klamen
New paintings and works on paper; through 3/31. • Gray, 1018 Madison Ave. (212-472-8787).

Wendy Mark
Monotypes of landscapes; through 3/24. • Bookstein Fine Art, 50 E. 78th St. (212-439-9605).

Richard Nonas
Recent sculpture; through 3/10. • Markey, 42 E. 76th St. (212-517-9892).

Petra Winterkamp
Paintings that explore the material appearance of language through symbolic forms of script and sign; through 4/7. • Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (212-288-5888).

57th Street Area

Vincent Amato
New steel sculptures of the human figure; through 3/5. • McGrath, 20 W. 57th St. (212-956-3366).

Nell Blaine
Abstract paintings and works on paper being exhibited together for the first time since the forties; through 3/10. • De Nagy, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-262-5050).

Isidoro Blasco
Collage of photographs mounted on wood, Sheetrock, and plaster taken from the artist's New York City apartment; through 3/10. • Smith, 501 Lexington Ave. (212-832-8831).

Jeffrey Ian Blondes
Paintings of landscapes and seascapes at Kinlochmoidart, on Scotland's west coast; through 3/10. • Findlay, 41 E. 57th St. (212-486-7660).

Pedro De Movellan
Sculptures inspired by nature; through 3/16. • Davidson, 41 E. 57th St. (212-759-7555).

Dorothy Dehner
Selected drawings and sculpture from the 1950s and 1960s exploring three-dimensional space; through 3/17. • Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-307-5730).

Barbara Hepworth
Fifteen marble sculptures by the British artist (1903–1975), made shortly after the United Nations installed her monumental public sculpture *Single Form* (1963) in front of the U.N. Secretariat Building in New York City; through 3/17. • PaceWildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (212-421-3292).

Suzanne Jaime-Mena
Minimal geometric sculptures in lead, copper, glass, and other materials; through 3/17. • Haime, 41 E. 57th St. (212-888-3550).

Donald Judd
A survey of the sculptor's prints; through 3/31. • Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. (212-489-3331).

Phillip King/Rick Dillingham
Large unglazed ceramic vessels by the British sculptor and president of the Royal Academy in London/Globes, gas cans, and other familiar forms by the Santa Fe ceramicist who died in 1994. Through 3/3. • Clark, 24 W. 57th St. (212-246-2205).

Oskar Kokoschka
A memorial exhibition of the Austrian artist's paintings, watercolors, and drawings, from public and private collections; through 3/17. • Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (212-541-4900).

Jacob Lawrence
A retrospective of works from the late artist's 60-year career; through 3/3. • DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave. (212-247-2111).

Amy Myers
Large-scale drawings in graphite, ink, and gouache that lyrically express the laws and postulates of physics; through 3/24. • Boone, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-752-2929).

Jules Pascin
Paintings and drawings by the Bulgarian-born artist (1885–1930) who spent most of his career in Paris and New York and whose portraits often emanated a kind of irremediable despair; through 3/10. • Forum, 745 Fifth Ave. (212-355-4545).

Jackson Pollock/David Smith
Paintings and sculptures from the 1930s and 1940s by the American artists; through 3/24. • Washburn, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-6780).

Billy Sullivan
Recent paintings, drawings, and photographs that chronicle the activities of the artist's family and friends; through 3/3. • Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (212-759-2345).

James Valerio
Twelve pencil drawings made between 1996 and 2001, including self-portraits, landscapes, and figure studies; through 3/31. • Adams, 41 W. 57th St. (212-644-5665).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Robert Bery
A survey of the artist's work from the past decade, including videos, photo-emulsion experiments on wood, metal, and found objects, and recent large-scale images printed on duraclear and mounted on canvas; through 3/3. • Stendhal, 386 W. Broadway (212-334-4649).

Eduardo Costa
Wall pieces and freestanding works made up of layers of acrylic paint applied with a brush and spatula; through 4/28. • De Torres, 140 Greene St. (212-431-5869).

Rudolph De Crignis
Paintings whose layers of color evoke changes of light during the day; through 3/31. • Blum, 99 Wooster St. (212-343-0441).

Susanna Heller
Recent paintings that use the wave formations left by tugboats as they leave New York harbor as a point of departure; through 3/31. • Ross, 568 Broadway (212-343-2161).

Edda Jachens/Ted Kinkaid
Paintings of geometric shapes on wooden boards/Images of ovals, grids, and stripes that are produced on a computer, photographed, and then printed as gravures; through 3/24. • Bridgewater/Lustberg & Blumenfeld, 560 Broadway (212-941-6355).

Nicholas Krushenick
Lesser-known paintings of the eighties by this artist, whose graphic, fractured abstraction influenced a number of younger artists; through 3/10. • Algus, 25 Thompson St. (212-966-1758).

Kathy Moss
Paintings of botanical forms that appear to be floating within layers of paint; through 3/20. • Haller, 560 Broadway (212-219-2500).

Joseph Raffael
New monumental watercolors of the artist's gardens and birds; through 5/6. • Hoffman, 429 W. Broadway (212-966-6676).

Lisa Ruyter
New paintings; through 3/10. • Koenig, 359 Broadway (212-334-9255).

Ground Rules

Galleries are generally open Tuesday through Saturday, from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

Retrospective

Drilling for Crude

He's 55, a tad older than the other bad girls and boys (Lisa Yuskavage, Mike Kelley, Matthew Barney, Damien Hirst, Tracey Emin) whose art has been making the outrageous commonplace over the past decade. But in terms of sheer gross-out power, the Los Angeles artist Paul McCarthy has it all over his younger contemporaries. The scary thing is that McCarthy takes his inspiration for pieces like *Cultural Gothic*—a life-size animatronic tableau in which a father nods happily as his son has sex with a goat—from our own sleazy consumer culture. Now New Yorkers, who have been able to view McCarthy's art only in dribs and drabs (a 1995 MOMA project and an installation in the 1997 Whitney Biennial), have a chance to see what they've been missing in **Paul McCarthy**, a retrospective opening at the New Museum of Contemporary Art this week (583 Broadway, near Prince Street; February 24 through May 13). The exhibition, which was organized by New Museum director Lisa Phillips and curator Dan Cameron and originated at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, covers the past three decades of McCarthy's output, from videos of his performances of the seventies to the sculptures and installations he began making in the mid-eighties, among them such controversial landmarks as *Bossy Burger* (1991), in which McCarthy, dressed as a clown, wreaked havoc with mayo and ketchup on a family sitcom's discarded set; *The Garden*, a linchpin of MOCA's dark 1992 "Helter Skelter" show; and the violently hilarious video *The Painter* (1995, pictured). It's deeply rude stuff, played out on a grand, operatic scale. Just one question remains: What will Rudy say? (McCarthy's works are also on view at Deitch Projects, 18 Wooster Street, February 24 to April 7; the atrium at 590 Madison Avenue, at 56th Street, February 21 to April 20; and Luhring Augustine Gallery, 531 West 24th Street, through April 7.) E.N.

Photograph courtesy of the New Museum of Contemporary Art.

Katy Schimert
Ceramic sculptures of male and female heads, torsos, arms, and legs; through 3/10. • Zwirner, 43 Greene St. (212-966-9074).

Chelsea

Moon Beom
Monochromatic paintings that refer to Asian landscapes and are made with automotive paints; through 3/17. • Foster, 529 W. 20th St. (212-229-0044).

Michael Bevilacqua
New paintings that blend references to the artist Ed Ruscha and his work, gardening, and the high-speed autobahn; through 3/17. • Fredericks Freiser, 504 W. 22nd St. (212-633-6555).

Alighiero e Boetti
An exhibition of works by the Italian conceptual artist organized in conjunction with the Archivio Boetti in Rome, including his "Camouflage" canvases from the sixties, maps dating from 1971 to 1992, kilim works from the nineties, and two self-portrait sculptures; through 3/31. • Gagosian, 555 W. 24th St. (212-741-1111).

Nina Bovasso
New paintings that depict precarious structures composed of compartmentalized motifs of geometric forms, hearts, flowers, and letters of the alphabet; through 3/10. • Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. (212-243-5937).

Rafael Bueno
Abstract paintings that bring togther large, gestural expanses of color, traces of the human figure, and thick, impasto passages; through 3/10. • Scott, 529 W. 20th St. (646-486-7004).

Victor Burgin
A video work titled *Nietzsche's Paris* that draws on the correspondence between Friedrich Nietzsche, Lou Salomé, and Paul Reé during eight months in 1882 when they formed an intellectual ménage à trois; through 3/24. • Burgin, 243 W. 18th St. (212-462-2668).

Nathan Carter
Sculptures and drawings, each of which commemorates a fiasco; through 3/17. • Kaplan, 416 W. 14th St. (212-645-7335).

David Dupuis
Recent drawings that depict faceless head-like forms composed of bands of high-key color, and "landscapes" made up of hundreds of familiar forms, among them bones, leaves, eyeballs, stones, and seeds; through 3/10. • Eller, 526-30 W. 25th St. (212-206-6411).

Seth Edenbaum
Paintings based on the French Revolutionary figure Jean Paul Marat; through 3/10. • Erben, 516 W. 20th St. (212-645-8701).

Sam Francis
Unique color trial proofs by the Abstract Expressionist; through 3/17. • Kempner, 501 W. 23rd St. (212-206-6872).

Jeff Gauntt
Paintings that depict banal interiors whose individual components, such as a beaded curtain, have a built-up texture suggestive of that object or material; through 3/17. • Sikkema, 530 W. 22nd St. (212-929-2262).

Jonathan Hammer
Large-scale photographs, drawings, and nine "leather paintings," each consisting of hundreds of pieces of inlayed sharkskin, snakeskin, and other leathers adorned with gold leaf and encased in elaborate gilded frames; through 2/24. • Marks, 523 W. 24th St. (212-243-0200).

Prudencio Irazabal
New paintings that use the fugue as a metaphorical system of development and unity; through 3/10. • Shainman, 513 W. 20th St. (212-645-1701).

Bill Jensen
New abstract paintings; through 3/24. • Boone, 541 W. 24th St. (212-752-2929).

Aisha Khalid/Ilmran Qureshi
Miniature paintings by two Pakistani artists. Through 3/17. • Admit One, 529 W. 20th St. (212-463-0164).

John Klima
"Go Fish," interactive media installations that explore the realm of computer games and their real-life consequences; through 3/24. • Postmasters, 459 W. 19th St. (212-727-3323).

Kathleen Kucka
Abstract paintings made by pouring acrylic paint on aluminum panels; through 3/24. • Coploff, 508-526 W. 26th St. (212-741-1149).

Pat Lipsky/Alexi Worth
Paintings that continue the artist's investigation of geometric structures and color relationships/Portraits of the artist's friends on sheets of Mylar. Through 3/10. Harris, 529 W. 20th St. (212-463-9666).

James Nares
New paintings that continue the artist's use of the individual brushstroke to explore the relationship between movement, gesture, and surface in painting; through 3/17. • Kasmin, 293 Tenth Ave. (212-563-4474).

Bill Owens
Color photographs of suburbs and suburbanites shot during the seventies and eighties; through 3/10. • Morris, 465 W. 23rd St. (212-727-2752).

Milton Resnick/Lena Liv
New paintings from the series "X Space"/Constructions that begin with the recovery of a found photograph that the artist manipulates and then combines with handmade paper, sand, and wrought and cast iron. Through 3/17. • Miller, 524 W. 26th St. (212-366-4774).

Jessica Stockholder
New sculptures and installations that explore painterly issues in volumetric space; through 3/10. • Gorney Bravin + Lee, 534 W. 26th St. (212-352-8372).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

C & M Arts
"About Faces," portraits by Cornell, Close, Currin, Picasso, Maar, Warhol, others; through 3/10. • 45 E. 78th St. (212-861-0020).

Kouros
"Seventy-five Years of Works on Paper: 1925–2000," a celebration of the gallery's twentieth anniversary through a survey of contemporary artists and modern masters including Hadzi, Kandinsky, Manes, Matisse, Nakian, others; through 3/10. • 23 E. 73rd St. (212-288-5888).

57th Street Area

Cohan
"The Big ID," works that explore the unconscious through personal iconography, by Eyre, Hancock,

Loy, Sugito, others; through 3/24. • 41 W. 57th St. (212-755-7171).

Krugier
"A Poetic Journey: Bresdin, Martin, Redon & Picasso," an examination of the romantic style in printmaking through the works of Bresdin, Martin, and Redon, and of how Picasso was influenced by that tradition; through 3/11. • 41 E. 57th St. (212-755-7288).

Perlow
Works by eleven artist couples, among them Brooks–Park, Irwin–Feltus, and Schapiro–Brach; through 3/10. • 41 E. 57th St. (212-644-7171).

Rosenfeld
"African-American Art: 20th-Century Masterworks, VIII," works by Artis, Barthe, Bearden, Delaney, Savage, VanDerZee, others; through 3/10. • 24 W. 57th St. (212-247-0082).

Rubin • Greenberg Van Doren
Paintings and drawings dating from the forties through the nineties, by de Kooning, Francis, Gorky, Mitchell, Reinhardt, Rockburne, Taaffe, others; through 3/17. • 730 Fifth Ave. (212-445-0444).

St. Etienne
"Our Beautiful and Tormented Austria!" works by self-taught Austrian artists including Fischer, Navratil, Rädler, Rainer, Walla, others; through 3/17. • 24 W. 57th St. (212-245-6734).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Apex
"Demonstration Room: Ideal House." Works that take the museum as point of reference, by Alÿs, Bruggeman, Gillick, Atelier Van Lishout, Vaisman, others; through 3/10. • 291 Church St. (212-431-5270).

Artists Space
"Really," video, sculpture, digital prints, and architectural drawings by Benson, Brower, the Butterflies of Love, Kerbel, Laurette, others; projects by Joyce Kim and Antenna Design; through 3/17. • 38 Greene St. (212-226-3970).

Dorsky
"At the Edge: The Horizon Line in Contemporary Art," works by Albuquerque, DiRado, Kim, Knott, Sugimoto, Westmoreland, others; through 4/14. • 379 W. Broadway (212-966-6170).

Gibson
Celebration of the gallery's fortieth anniversary with works by Acconci, Beuys, Christo, Hutchinson, Oppenheim, others; through 4/7. • 568 Broadway (212-925-1192).

Henry Street Settlement
"Interior Landscapes," contemporary works by Bachhuber, Cox, Herritt, Joo, Teruy, Watanabe, others; through 3/31. • 466 Grand St. (212-598-0400).

Thread Waxing Space
"Research Architecture: Selections From the Collection Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain du Centre, Orleans." More than 100 architectural models, drawings, and documents, in conjunction with Pratt Institute and Storefront for Art and Architecture; through 3/17. • 476 Broadway (212-966-9520).

Chelsea

Boesky
"Poetry Plastique," works by Andre, Bee, Cage, Lin, McVarish, Schor, Snow, others; through 3/10. • 535 W. 22nd St. (212-680-9889).

Grimm
"Bug," works by Katchadourian, Scanga, others; through 3/17. • 505 W. 28th St. (212-564-7662).

Silverstein
"Future Perfect," works by Astley, Kim, Von Bergen; through 3/10. • 520 W. 21st St. (212-929-4300).

Stark
One-person exhibitions by Highstein, Ledy, and Wellmann; through 3/10. • 555 W. 25th St. (212-807-1051).

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Rotunda
"Lost and Found: Reclaimed Moments," inventive reuses of discarded objects by Fleisher, Ohashi, Park, Shin, Son, others; through 3/10. • 33 Clinton St., Brooklyn (718-875-4047).

Photography

Thomas Demand
New works on political themes, including photographs of life-size environments constructed by the artist from cardboard, and a film consisting of 24 still images shown in a continual loop; 2/24–4/7. • 303, 525 W. 22nd St. (212-255-1121).

Elijah Gowin/Nathan Lerner
Photographs from the series "Hymnal of Dreams" that depict surreal fabricated scenes inspired by the artist's southern ancestry/Abstract studies produced while the artist was teaching at the New Bauhaus in the late thirties and early forties. Through 3/17. • Mann, 210 Eleventh Ave. (212-989-7600).

Houk
Photographs from the personal collection of Harry Lunn (1933–1998), the art dealer, former CIA agent, and founding father of the fine-art-photography art market, including works by Adams, Abbott, Evans, Mapplethorpe, McDermott & McGough, Serrano, others; through 3/10. • 745 Fifth Ave. (212-750-7070).

ICP
"Andy Warhol: Photography." The first major exhibition of the artist's photographs, including complementary paintings; through 3/18. • "Perfecting Mankind: Eugenics and Photography." An exhibit exploring the way in which photography was employed by the proponents of eugenics, a movement formed in the late nineteenth century that aimed to "breed better people"; through 3/18. • 1133 Sixth Ave. (212-860-1777), Tues.-Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-8 (5-8 voluntary contribution), Sat. and Sun. 10-6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

ICP Uptown
"Carrie Mae Weems: The Hampton Project." An installation that employs the turn-of-the-century photographs taken by Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864–1952) at Hampton Institute, images intended to document the success of the institute for the "Exhibit of American Negroes" at the Universal Exposition of 1900 in Paris; through 4/1. • 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (212-860-1777), Tues.- Thurs. 10-5, Fri. 10-8, Sat. and Sun. 10-6; $6, $4 students and seniors.

Bill Jacobson
Large color photographs of New York street scenes using the artist's signature blurring technique; through 3/10. • Saul, 535 W. 22nd St. (212-627-2410).

Simen Johan
Color photographs that depict children alone in inhospitable environments; through 3/31. • Gallery 24, 552 W. 24th St. (212-414-0370).

Jean Kallina
Silver gelatin prints that depict views of interiors in European palaces; through 3/31. • Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St. (212-327-2526).

Kevin Landers
Photographs and a video of urban streets and interiors; through 3/10. • Dee/Glasoe, 529 W. 20thSt. (212-924-7545).

Ray K. Metzker
Black-and-white photographs of landscapes in Italy, France, Turkey, and various locations in the United States; through 3/31. • Miller, 20 W. 57th St. (212-397-3930).

Meyerowitz
Recent street photography by Einzig, Harnett, Kayafas, Powell; through 3/17. • 580 Broadway (212-625-3434).

Rika Noguchi
Images of cityscapes and construction sites in New and Brazil and of islands being built by the Dutch government; through 3/24. • D'Amelio Terras, 525 W. 22nd St. (212-352-9460).

Dario Oleaga
Images of urban detritus as still life; through 3/15. • Generous Miracles, 529 W. 20th St. (212-352-2858).

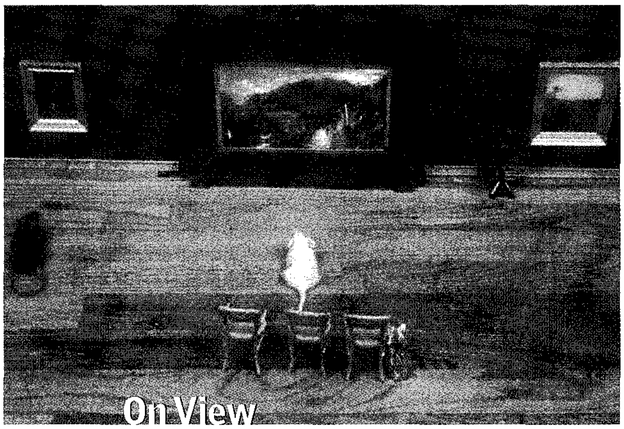
PaineWebber
"A Maritime Album." Rare photographs documenting America's fishing, sailing, and whaling traditions, as well as naval encounters, shipbuilding ventures, and daily maritime life, selected by John Szarkowski from the archives of the Mariner's Museum, in Newport News, Virginia; through 4/1. • 1285 Ave. of the Americas (212-713-2885), Mon.-Fri. 8-6.

Hiroshi Sugimoto
Portraits of wax figures set against black backdrops; through 3/24. • Sonnabend, 536 W. 22nd St. (212-627-1018).

Karlheinz Weinberger/J. D. 'Okhai Ojeikere
Photographs taken in the fifties showing working-class models posing in their everyday surroundings/A 30-year documentation of Nigerian hairstyles. Through 3/31. • Scalo, 560 Broadway (212-334-9393).

Wols
Still lifes, portraits, abstractions, and fashion work from the thirties by the German artist (1913–1951) who worked in Paris and was part of the *Informel* movement; 2/22–4/21. • Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (212-794-4444).

Zabriskie
Photographs by the painters Cramer,



Not Kid Stuff

In case you picked up on contemporary art's obsession with childhood a little late, here's a compilation of almost everything you've missed. **Almost Warm & Fuzzy: Childhood and Contemporary Art** takes a predominantly dark, humorous view of wee ones' worlds in paintings and sculpture by more than 30 American and international artists, among them Kim Dingle, Mike Kelley, Jeff Koons, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Bill Scanga (above, *At the Met,* 1997), Sandy Skoglund, and Laurie Simmons. At P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, 22-25 Jackson Avenue, at 46th Avenue, Long Island City; through April 8.

Photograph courtesy of the artist.

Crawford, Kuniyoshi, Pousette-Dart, Shahn, Sheeler; through 3/17. • 41 E. 57th St. (212-752-1223).

Museums

American Craft Museum

"Made in Oakland: The Furniture of Garry Knox Bennett." The first retrospective of one of America's best-known furniture-makers; through 4/29. • "Confrontational Clay: The Artist as Social Critic." Works by 28 contemporary ceramicists whose work addresses social, political, and cultural issues; through 3/16. • 40 W. 53rd St. (212-956-3535), Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., and Sun. 10-6, Thurs. 10-8 (pay what you wish 6-8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History

"The Butterfly Conservatory: Tropical Butterflies Alive in Winter." More than 300 butterflies from Central, South, and North America housed in a walk-in vivarium; through 5/28. • "Full Moon: Apollo Mission Photographs of the Lunar Landscape." Rarely seen photographic prints from NASA's Apollo missions to the moon; through 3/28. • Central Park West at 79th St. (212-769-5100); Sun.-Thurs. 10-5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10-8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Asia Society at Midtown

"Can We Feed Ourselves? A Focus on Asia: Photographs by Hiroji Kubota." Photographs taken in Nepal, Cambodia, Burma, and other Asian countries that focus on food production, the population explosion, and environmental destruction; through 4/1. • 502 Park Ave., at 59th St. (212-288-6400), Tues.-Sat. 10-6; Sun. noon-5. $4, $2 students and seniors (free Tues.-Fri. noon-2).

Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts

"Women Designers in the U.S.A., 1900–2000: Diversity and Difference"; through 2/25. • 18 W. 86th St. (212-501-3000), Tues.-Sun. 11-5 (Thurs. to 8); $2, $1 students and seniors.

Bronx Museum of the Arts

"Leonardo Drew." One new sculpture composed of two sections—one of cotton and the other of wood and found objects—and related drawings; through 3/4. • "Carlos Garaicoa: The Ruins, the Utopia." Drawings, photographs, and mixed-media and video installations by a Havana-based artist; through 3/4. • "Context: Mexico's Taller de Gráfica Popular and Its Legacy." Prints from the museum's permanent collection made by various members of the workshop; through 3/4. • 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. 3-9, Thurs. and Fri. 10-5, Sat. and Sun. noon-6; $3, $2 students and seniors, Wed. free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art

"Committed to the Image: Contemporary Black Photographers." Works by 94 photographers, among them Albert Chong, Gordon Parks, Jeffrey Henson Scales, Carrie Mae Weems, and Ernest Withers; through 4/29. • 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000), Wed.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. 11-6 (till 11 P.M. on the first Sat. of every month), Sun. 11-6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

China Institute

"Living Heritage: Vernacular Environment in China," photographs by Li Yuxiang and other Chinese photographers taken between 1993 and 1999 that explore the role of the traditional Chinese home; through 6/10. • 125 E. 65th St. (212-744-8181), Mon., Wed., Fri., Sat. 10-5, Tues. and Thurs. 10-8, Sun. 1-5; $3, $2 students and seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution

"The Opulent Eye of Alexander Girard." A retrospective of works by the mid-century American designer and architect (1907–1993); through 3/18. • 2 E. 91st St. (212-849-8300), Wed.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 12-5, Tues. 10-9 (5-9, free admission); $8, $3 students and seniors.

Dahesh Museum of Art

"Gérôme & Goupil: Art and Enterprise." An exhibition exploring the mutually advantageous partnership between the nineteenth-century painter Jean-Léon Gérôme and his art dealer/publisher Adolphe Goupil; through 5/5. • 601 Fifth Ave., at 49th St. (212-759-0606), Tues.-Sat. 11-6; free.

Dia Center for the Arts

"Diana Thater: *Knots and Surfaces*." A large-scale multiprojection video installation that interacts with the architecture of Dia's third-floor gallery; through 1/30/02. • "Panamarenko: *Orbit*." An exhibition pairing the Belgian artist's key work, *Aeromodeller*, an experimental flying machine built in 1969–71, with a work created this year; through 6/17. • "Bridget Riley: *Reconnaissance*." The British artist's seminal paintings from the sixties and seventies in which carefully calibrated geometric patterns seem to move rhythmically across a canvas; through 6/17. • "Jorge Pardo: *Project*." A transformation of the Dia Center's 6,000-square-foot ground floor featuring colored ceramic tiles, mural paintings, glass dividers, stylish seating, increased natural light, and an expanded bookstore; through 6/17. • "Rodney Graham and Bruce Nauman: . . . *the nearest faraway place* . . ." New and earlier works by both artists that reflect their shared interests in the myth of the American West; through 6/17. • 548 W. 22nd St. (212-989-5566), Wed.-Sun. noon-6; $6, $3 students and seniors.

Drawing Center

"Metamorphoses and Transformation: The Drawings of Rosemarie Trockel." The first New York museum exhibition of the German artist's drawings, organized by the Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris; 2/24–4/7. • 35 Wooster St. (212-219-2166), Tues.-Fri. 10-6, Sat. 11-6; donation suggested.

Frick Collection

"The Draftsman's Art: Master Drawings From the National Gallery of Scotland." Drawings by Da Vinci, Raphael, and other old masters, as well as works by Scottish artists; through 2/25. • "Mantegna's *Descent Into Limbo*, From the Barbara Piasecka Johnson Collection." A smaller version of Mantegna's original masterpiece that was probably painted by the artist for Ferdinand Carlo, the last Duke of Mantua, around 1470–75; through 8/1. • "Six Paintings From the Former Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Hay Whitney on Loan From the Greentree Foundation." Works by Corot, Degas, Manet, Picasso, Redon; through 7/29. • 1 E. 70th St. (212-288-0700); Tues.-Sat. 10-6, Sun. 1-6; $7, $5 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Grey Art Gallery

"The First Steps: Emerging Artists From Japan." Works in various media by seven young Japanese artists chosen by an international panel from over 1,000 applicants; through 4/14. • 100 Washington Sq. E. (212-998-6780); Tues., Thurs., Fri. 11-6, Wed. 11-8, Sat. 11-5; $2.50 suggested donation.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum

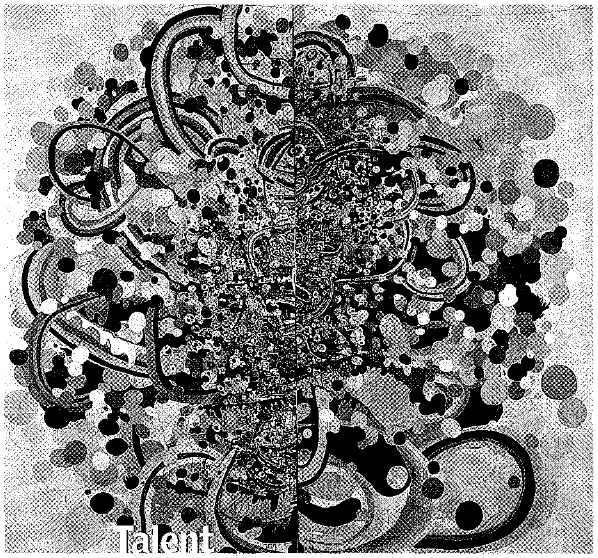
"Hugo Boss Prize 2000: Marjetica Potrc." An installation exploring the urban condition as it manifest itself worldwide by this Slovenian artist who was awarded the Hugo Boss Prize in November 2000; through 4/29. • "The Global Guggenheim: Selections From the Extended Collection." Approximately 175 works from the museum's collection, including paintings, sculpture, and works on paper spanning Impressionism through Pop Art; through 4/22. • "Project for a New Guggenheim Museum in New York City." Architect Frank Gehry's preliminary plans and models for a new Guggenheim developed in connection with the museum's response to a Request for Proposals issued by the New York City Economic Development Corporation for the development of Piers 9, 13, and 14 on the East River in lower Manhattan; through 4/21. • 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (212-423-3500), Sun.-Wed. 9-6, Fri. and Sat. 9-8 (Fri. 6-8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $8 students and seniors.

Jewish Museum

"Charlotte Salomon: Life? Or Theatre?" The first New York exhibit of gouaches by this artist (1917–1943) who drew on her own experience, and that of her family, in Nazi Germany; through 3/25. • 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (212-423-3200), Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11-5:45, Tues. 11-8 (Tues. after 5, pay what you wish); $8, $5.50 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art

"William Trost Richards in the Metropolitan Museum of Art." Drawings and paintings by the Philadelphia-born artist (1833–1905), depicting landscapes and marine subjects in Pennsylvania, New England, and the British Isles; through 5/13. • "Correggio and Parmigianino: Master Draftsmen of the Renaissance." More than 130 drawings from private and public collections by the two masters of the Emilian School of early-sixteenth-century Italy; through 5/6. • "Sultan 'Ali of Mashhad, Master of Nasta Liq." Examples of calligraphy by the master of NASTA LIQ, the writing style likened to



Talent

Circus Maximus

Initially, **Nina Bovasso**'s paintings may remind you of works by two artists you'd never put together in a million years: the tilting patchwork houses of Austrian Fritz Hundertwasser, and the late cartoony paintings of Philip Guston. But the odd references work—not simply because they're funny together, but because **they're so seamlessly incorporated** into Bovasso's own vision. Her latest show includes compositions of intricately compartmentalized structures that suggest anything from a teetering apartment building to an amusement park (above, *Inspiration Point*, 2000), alongside what appear to be close-ups of those structures in different spatial configurations—it's Bovasso at her precarious best. At Clementine Gallery, 526 West 26th Street; through March 10.

Photograph courtesy of the Clementine Gallery.

flying geese that was favored in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Iran for poetical texts; through 4/22. • "Photography: Processes, Preservation, and Conservation." An exhibition celebrating the museum's new Sherman Fairchild Center for Works on Paper and Photograph Conservation, exploring various photographic processes and methods of conservation; through 5/6 • "Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Chinese Paintings From the Robert H. Ellsworth Collection in the Metropolitan Museum of Art"; through 8/19. • "A Century of Design, Part III: 1950–1975." The third in a four-part series of exhibitions surveying twentieth-century design in all media; through 4/1. • "The Still Lifes of Evaristo Baschenis: The Music of Silence." Paintings by the seventeenth-century Italian artist known for his poetic still lifes of musical instruments; through 3/4. • "Rain From the Moon: Silver in Ancient Peru." Approximately 130 silver objects from private and public collections in the United States; through 4/22. • 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (212-879-5500); Tues.-Thurs. and Sun. 9:30-5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30-9; $10 contribution, $5 students and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (212-923-3700); Tues.-Sun. 9:30-4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $10, $5 students and seniors.

Morgan Library

"Jean Poyet: Artist to the Court of Renaissance France." The first one-person show dedicated to the work of the fifteenth-century French manuscript illuminator who worked for the courts of Louis XI, Charles VIII, and Louis XII; through 5/6. • "The World Observed: Five Centuries of Drawings From the Collection of Charles Ryskamp." Works from the collection of the former director of the Morgan Library and the Frick Collection; through 5/9. • 29 E. 36th St. (212-685-0008), Tues.-Thurs. 10:30-5, Fri. 10:30-8, Sat. 10:30-6, Sun. 12-6; $8, $6 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio

"Antonio Frasconi: Langston Hughes's *Let America Be America Again*, a Portfolio of Woodcuts, 1997–98." A recent suite of prints by the internationally recognized master of the woodcut medium; through 5/20. • "Contemporánea 2001: Neighbors—An Installation by Leandro Erlich." A site-specific installation that transforms a typical apartment-building corridor into a confounding space of peepholes, locked doors, and a strange elevator; through 5/20. • "Here & There/Aquí y Allá: Six Artists From San Juan." Works in various media by six contemporary artists living in Puerto Rico; through 5/20. • 1230 Fifth Ave. (212-831-7272), Wed.-Sun. 11-5; $4, $2 students and seniors.

Museum for African Art

"African Forms." Handcrafted objects from more than 156 ethnic groups and 34 African nations, among them clothing, jewelry, kitchen utensils, devotional objects, and musical instruments; through 8/8. • 593 Broadway (212-966-1313), Tues.-Fri. 10:30-5:30, Sat. and Sun. noon-6; $5, $2.50 students, seniors, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art

"ABCD: A Collection of Art Brut." *Art brut* works by Darger, Mackintosh, Ramirez, Wölfli, and others, from the collection of the Paris-based foundation ABCD (Art Brut Connaissance & Diffusion); through 7/28. • Two Lincoln Square (212-595-9533), Tues.-Sun. 11:30-7:30; free.

Museum of Modern Art

"Workspheres." An exhibition examining the changing nature of the workplace and the role of design in creating solutions to accommodate such changes, including works from LOT/EK architecture, the MIT Media Laboratory, Digital Image Design, IDEO, Jongeriuslab, and others; through 4/22. • "MoMA 2000: Open Ends." The final cycle of the MoMA 2000 exhibitions, featuring works from the museum's collection from the sixties to the present; through 3/4. • "Van Gogh's Postman: The Portraits of Joseph Roulin." Five of the six paintings that the artist made of his friend and protector during 1888 and 1889; through 5/15. • "Projects 70: Janine Antoni, Shahzia Sikander, Kara Walker." Three new banners displayed on the museum's 53rd Street façade; through 3/13. • 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-9480); Sat.-Tues., Thurs. 10:30-5:45, Fri. 10:30-8:15 (4:30-8:15 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $10, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York

"Working Women: A Century of New York Junior League Volunteerism." Photographs, clothing, and ephemera documenting the movement founded by Mary Harriman in 1901; through 8/12. • "Guys & Dolls: The Fabled Musical of Broadway." Scene designs, costumes, photographs, and ephemera drawn from the archives of composer Frank Loesser and playwright Abe Burrows that reveal how they turned the Damon Runyon story "The Idyll of Miss Sarah Brown" into the 1950 hit musical; through 6/10. • "The City Shops: Photographs by Martha Cooper and Fred W. McDarrah." Images from the sixties to the present documenting shops in New York City neighborhoods; through 4/15. • 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (212-534-1672), Wed.-Sat. 10-5, Sun. 1-5; $5 suggested contribution, $4 students and seniors.

Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology

"Dreaming in Print: A Decade of *Visionaire*." An exhibition covering the first ten years of the multi-format magazine of fashion and art; through 4/21. • "Belgian Fashion Design: Antwerp Style." A survey of modern Belgian fashion design as seen through more than 100 clothing ensembles dating from 1982 to the present; through 4/14. • Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (212-217-7642), Tues.-Fri. noon-8, Sat. 10-5; free.

National Academy of Design

"Selections From the Collection." Recently acquired works by National Academicians Sam Gilliam, Red Grooms, Malcolm Morley, and Larry Rivers, as well as masterworks by William Merritt Chase, Asher B. Durand, John Singer Sargent, George Tooker, and others; through 5/6. • "The Cos Cob Art Colony: Impressionists on the Connecticut Shore." Works by the group of American artists who gathered in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich, Connecticut, between 1890 and 1920, among them Childe Hassam, Theodore Robinson, John Twachtman, and J. Alden Weir; through 5/13. • 1083 Fifth Ave. (212-369-4880), Wed., Thurs. 12-5, Fri. 10-6, Sat. and Sun. 10-5; $5.

New Museum of Contemporary Art

"Paul McCarthy." The first U.S. survey of the Los Angeles-based artist's work, a fusion of sculpture and performance characterized by combinations of pop-culture clichés, social taboos, and art-historical references; 2/24–5/13. • 583 Broadway (212-219-1222), Wed. and Sun. noon-6, Thurs.-Sat. noon-8 (free Thurs. 6-8); $6, $3 artists, students, and seniors.

New York Public Library

"Drawings by Charles Addams." A rotating selection of drawings by the *New Yorker* cartoonist; through 6/30. • Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (212-869-8089), Mon. 10-6, Tues. and Wed. 11-7:30, Thurs.-Sat. 10-6; free.

New-York Historical Society

"Irwin Silver: Nightwalks." Photographs of New York City at night that were taken by Silver between 1979 and 1989; through 5/20. • "The Sight of Music: Prints From the Collection of Reba and Dave Williams." Twentieth-century prints offering visual interpretations of music, by Chuck Close, Red Grooms, Roy Lichtenstein, and others; through 6/17. • "Elder Grace: The Nobility of Aging." Photographs of 80 African-American women and men by Chester Higgins Jr.; through 3/4. • 2 W. 77th St. (212-873-3400); Tues.-Sun. 11-5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center

"Almost Warm and Fuzzy: Childhood and Contemporary Art." Works that address childhood by more than 30 American and international contemporary artists, among them Mike Kelley, Jeff Koons, Laurie Simmons, and Tim Rollins and K.O.S.; through 4/8. • "Erik Steinbrecher: Couch Park." An installation of new works on paper by the Swiss artist; through 4/8. • "Disasters of War: Works by Francisco de Goya, Henry Darger, and Jake and Dinos Chapman." Works that mediate horrific historical events; through 2/25. • "Georges Adéagbo: *Abraham—L'ami de Dieu*." Installations by a West African artist that combine paintings, sculptures, books, handwritten texts, photographs, newspaper articles, and objects; through 3/29. • "Some New Minds." Works by emerging artists Omer Fast, Christoph Girardet, Julia Loktev, Dave Muller, John Pilson, Brad Tucker, Pablo Vargas-Lugo, James Yamada; through 2/28. • 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave., Long Island City (718-784-2084), Wed.-Sun. 12-6; $5 suggested donation.

Queens Museum of Art

"Gio Ponti: A Metaphysical World." Furniture, sculpture, and drawings by the groundbreaking Italian designer and founder of *Domus* magazine, including his Superleggera chair of 1957 made for Cassina; through 5/20. • "Around, Around, and Away—Not-a-Superhero and the Myth of New York." A wall drawing by Luca Buvoli accompained by recorded narration and sound installations by Jeffrey Lependorf; 2/22–5/27. • "Heart of Glass." Works by seven artists who take a conceptual and poetic approach to glass, among them Josiah McElheny, Katy Schimert, Kiki Smith, and Not Vital; 2/22–5/27. • New York City Building, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, Queens (718-592-9700), Tues.-Fri. 10-5, Sat. and Sun. 12-5; $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem

"Glenn Ligon: Stranger." Ten works from the artist's series of stenciled coal-dust paintings that were inspired by James Baldwin's *Stranger in the Village* (1953), in which the writer chronicled his experiences living in a small village in Switzerland; through 4/1. • "Material and Matter." Works in all media from the museum's permanent collection, by Willie Cole, Leonardo Drew, David Hammons, Odili Donald Odita, Alison Saar, James VanDerZee, and others; through 4/1. • "John Bankston: The Capture and Escape of Mr. M, Chapter I." Paintings on paper that illustrate the story of the abduction, enslavement, rescue, and escape of Mr. M, an "everyman," and that borrow imagery from nineteenth-century slave narratives, science fiction, and fairy tales; through 4/1. • 144 W. 125th St. (212-864-4500), Wed., Thurs., Sat., and Sun. noon-6, Fri. 12-8; $5, $3 students and seniors.

Whitney Museum of American Art

"Kenneth Josephson: A Retrospective." The first full-scale assessment of the work of this photographer, from his Conceptualist works of the sixties and seventies to his more recent images of street life in India, nudes, and European landscapes; 2/22–5/27. • "The Things Themselves: Pictures of Dust by Vik Muniz." The artist's photographs of his drawings of dust based on photographs of minimalist sculptures in the museum's permanent collection; through 5/20. • "Sol LeWitt: Retrospective." A survey of the artist's wall drawings, structures, photographs, and works on paper from the past 40 years; through 2/25. • "A Way With Words: Selections From the Whitney Museum of American Art." Text-based works by 12 artists, among them Glenn Ligon, Suzanne McClelland, Shirin Neshat, Richard Prince, and Christopher Wool; through 3/30. • 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (212-570-3676); Tues.-Thurs., Sat., Sun. 11-6, Fri. 1-9 (pay what you wish every Fri. 6-9); $10, $8 students, seniors, and groups of fifteen or more.

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris

"A Way With Words: Selections From the Whitney Museum of American Art." Fourteen text-based works by twelve contemporary artists, among them Glenn Ligon, Suzanne McClelland, Shirin Neshat, Jack Pierson, and Christopher Wool; through 3/30. • 120 Park Ave. (917-663-2550), Mon.-Fri. 11-6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's

2/23 at 10 and 2: "Wine." On view from 2/17. • 20 Rockefeller Plaza (212-636-2000).

Doyle

2/21 at 10: "Fine Furniture, Decorations, and Paintings." On view from 2/17. • 175 E. 87th St. (212-427-2730).

Sotheby's

2/21 at 10:15 and 2: "Watches." On view from 2/16. 2/23 at 10:15 and 2: "Impressionist and Modern Art." On view from 2/17. • 1334 York Ave., at 72nd St. (212-606-7000).

Restaurants

Edited by Robin Raisfeld
& Rob Patronite

Ask Gael

How can I impress my new in-laws from Hong Kong?

All heads will turn and your bride's folks will realize New York is not all that parochial when a duo of **Shun Lee** waiters launches your banquet with "Panda's Garden"—three adorable cubs carved from turnips and "hairy vegetable," frolicking under gnarled trees made of candied walnuts. And the eight cold delicacies encircling the garden on the lazy susan—red-cooked duck tongues, seaweed shrimp roll, sweet-and-sour radish, peppery beef tongue, wine-marinated chicken among them—will seal the deal. It's a tasting choreographed to flaunt the vegetable-carving mastery of chef Chang Kewifai, from Szechuan, and to spotlight the Hang Chow cooking of host Michael Tong's newest chef import, Zhu Xin Rong. At the feast's debut, our savvy Sinophilic eaters swoon over Zhu's cosmic West Lake Old Mother Goose soup and the fatty, rich red-cooked pork. Bass steamed in Chinese wine is subtle perfection paired with Shanghai-style red-cooked fish. Sesame shrimp disguised as strawberries jewel a platter of eel and tiny shrimp. By the time the vegetable-blossom platter arrives—ginkgo nuts piled into a turnip carved like a lotus—I can barely do justice to a black mushroom. (43 West 65th Street; call George or Henry at 212-595-8895 with at least three days' notice; ten courses for ten (minimum) people, $2,000.)

Photograph by Adrienne Helé.

New and Noteworthy

Adä
As you might guess from the Murano-glass chandeliers and bas-relief nudes, this isn't your run-of-the-mill curry kitchen. Your dinner choices are limited to two streamlined prix fixe menus that run $55 and $65, and feature newfangled novelties like salmon quenelles with cashew rice and fresh coconut curry, garam masala quail with date-and-pistachio pillau, and wild-mushroom biryani with white-truffle oil. • 208 E. 58th St. (212-371-6060). (M–E)

★ Alain Ducasse at the Essex House
After a harrowing ride through the critics' spanking machine, eight-Michelin-star chef Alain Ducasse has emerged if not triumphant then at least standing. All his Cartier pens have been dutifully stolen, the array of mysterious knives presented in a leather case is gone, but the extravagantly Art Deco cocoon of a room feels more like a $160-prix fixe Michelin supernova now that the kitchen has pulled up its socks. Dishes that were very good to begin with, have gotten even better—pea soup with crab cakes; silken woodcock, pheasant, and foie gras terrine; halibut with sea-urchin custard; glorious cheese; luscious rhubarb clafouti—and even the few disappointments don't sting so badly now that the chastised Ducasse has shown us his warm and cuddly side. • 155 W. 58th St. (212-265-7300). (E)

★ Aleutia
You may have to navigate past the murky leather swathed bar crowd and scurry up the industrial steps to escape their piercing mating calls, but forsooth, there is light at the top of the stairs. In fact, if Aleutia is willing to shift its priorities a bit, it has the potential of being considered among the city's most inventive and satisfying seafood restaurants. Vibrantly flavored dishes like citrus grilled octopus or pancetta wrapped cod provide life preserving—make that affirming distractions—from the hormonally raging sea around you. • 220 Park Ave. So. (212-529-3111). (E)

★ AZ
If you think pan-Asian fusion is so last decade, make haste to the Flatiron triplex that used to be Flowers, remade with a glass elevator and retractable roof and now home to chef Patricia Yeo and her inspired culinary inventions. What works? A trio of sensational chutneys on Indian flatbread, and lapsang souchon-smoked quail with scallion pancakes, for starters. A street-level lounge caters to lighter appetites. • 21 W. 17th St. (212-691-8888). (E)

Banjara
In spite of its location amid all those cookie-cutter curry cookers, Banjara is an oasis on Little India's restaurant row. The room and adjoining lounge are stylish and cliché-free. And chef Tuhin Dutta's unusual regional dishes like juicy clay-oven chicken marinated in wine and cream, and dumpakht (think super-colossal Indian pot pie) should dispel any worries that the street's mythical underground shared kitchen has taken on a new client. • 97 First Ave. at 6th St. (212-477-5956). (M)

Bot
The all-plastic décor at this NoLIta spinoff of Chelsea's Bottino refutes every Tuscan-trattoria cliché in the book, but the simply prepared, flavorful food and the mostly Italian wine list are reassuring proof that a traditional heart beats inside its ultramodern body. The iMac-hued garden room is linked to the front lounge by a serpentine expanse of chartreuse wall and an open kitchen and bar, which dispense fresh salads, satisfying pastas, and fruity Prosecco cocktails in equal measure. • 231 Mott St. (646-613-1312). (M)

★ Brasserie 8 1/2
At this souped-up designer bookend to the newly modish Brasserie, you get big brasserie dishes plus a pumpkin-carpeted-diva staircase entrance, and two subterranean, airport lounge style bars. The simpler menu choices tend to be better, like the frisée salad and the cornflake-crusted crab cakes. The evening scene is overcooked, but lunch at bar No. 2 (the blue green one) is better. • 9 W. 57th St. (212-829-0812). (M–E)

City Eatery
Who knows? With a spiffy renovation and new chef Scott Conant (formerly of Chianti and San Domenico) in the kitchen turning out lusty braised short ribs, zesty pastas, and olive-oil-poached tuna, the dining room formerly known as Astor Restaurant may become as popular a NoHo destination as the lively lounge downstairs. • 316 Bowery (212-253-8644). (I–M)

Curry Leaf
While the Curry Hill competition focuses on the food of specific subcontinental regions—or, at the very least, hews to the meat-eating north or the veggie-oriented south—the idea here is to expand the edible horizons by offering Kashmiri chicken korma alongside Pakistani chana masala and Goan lamb vindaloo. There's more to Indian food, after all, than curry powder—there's the leaf, too, used here as a garnish. • 99 Lexington Ave., at 27th St. (212-725-5558). (M)

★ Del Frisco's
Want to see what mahogany fashioned by testosterone looks like? This is without question the most urbanely elegant steakhouse you will ever see, its meat locker filled with terrific beef. Now if they can only figure out how to get their staff up to the level of their surroundings and kitchen. The place is New York landmark potential. • 1221 Sixth Ave., at 49th St. (212-575-5129). (E)

★ Dim Sum gogo
What do you get when a French-American food writer (Colette Rossant) collaborates with a Hong Kong chef (Guy Lieu)? Dumpling dough flavored with beet juice, seasoned beef patties on steamed buns with taro fries, roast chicken smothered with fried garlic stems, and 24 kinds of dumplings. Plus four variations on the dough-wrapper theme, four different sauces, and microwave-safe takeout containers. • 5 E. Broadway (212-732-0797). (I–M)

★ The Dining Room
You know how you love cooking those intimate dinners at home for just you and your close friends? Oh, you don't. Well then don't you wish you were at one? This scrumptious example of turning lemons into lemon soufflé not only transforms an awkward layout into a series of cozy hideaways but it gets you all

warm and snuggly with hearty American cuisine that surprisingly weighs less than the conversations around it. • 154 E. 79th St. (212-327-2500). (M-E)

District
At this new hotel restaurant, David Rockwell's design makes playful reference to the theater-district locale, and Sam DeMarco's menus make mouthwatering reference to the fun, original food he popularized downtown at First. For breakfast, there's the Scramble (smoked salmon, cream-cheese fondue, latkes, and dill-caper gremolata). For lunch, "double features" like potato pierogi with a brisket sandwich. Plus a $28 pre-theater dinner and a late-night "mini-bar." • 130 W. 46th St. (212-485-2999). (M)

★ Esca
Somewhere in between overseeing Babbo and Lupa, taping his cooking show, and just basking in the glory of his own undeniable greatness, Mario Batali has found time to earn another gastronomic gold star. At Esca, the overachiever in the orange clogs, partner Joe Bastianich, and chef David Pasternack do for Southern Italian seafood what Le Bernardin has done for French: The poured concrete bar with a built-in conduit for ice and oysters is an inspired take on raw-shellfish service; crudo (think Italian sashimi) is incredibly fresh and of the highest quality; pastas like spaghetti with fresh chiles, mint, and a one-pound lobster are irresistible. And the whole fish for two, roasted in a sea-salt crust that's cracked tableside, is a riveting performance worthy of the theater-district locale. • 402 W. 43rd St. (212-564-7272). (M-E)

Fernicola
Mesa Grill alumna Barbara Bogart imbues Italian fare with her own modern accents at this former Williamsburg warehouse: Chili-seared squid tossed with prosciutto and frisee sauced with roasted-fig vinaigrette; cavatelli with oxtail ragu; chicken marinated in cranberry and pineapple juice. Bogart's is a palate founded in classical technique, yet she takes a refreshing approach to the dishes on her menu. • 119 Kent Ave. (718-388-9000). (M-E)

Fleur de Sel
Chef Cyril Renaud wanted his first restaurant to be a personal statement. So he hung his own watercolors, painted the menu covers, and named the place after the highly prized, hand-harvested sea salt that's native to Brittany, just like him. His $52 prix fixe menu is small and changes daily, so there's no telling when you might see that lobster-avocado salad or venison fillet with juniper berries and orange zest again. • 5 E. 20th St. (212-460-9100). (M-E)

★ Gnocco Caffe
Co-owner Pierluigi Palazzo named this East Village café after the traditional Modenese snack of crispy, puffy fried dough, usually served with prosciutto di Parma. But just to complicate matters, the gently-priced menu also offers two versions of gnocchetti (an entirely different, equally delicious thing), plus well-dressed, unusually fresh salads and an unassuming pork tenderloin lavished with Parmigiano-Reggiano shavings and an aged-balsamic emulsion. • 337 E. 10th St. (212-677-1913). (I)

★ Grand Sichuan Int'l Midtown
Each successive branch of this Szechuan chainlet has become progressively glitzier, culminating in this location's chandeliers and wall to wall carpeting. What separates this one from the kung pao pack is menu oddities like the eight dishes inspired by a Chinese TV show and a super-spicy category called "Mao's home cooking." (The chairman liked his chili peppers—who knew?) • 745 Ninth Ave., nr. 50th St. (212-582-2288). (I)

Hudson Cafeteria
The room is big, dark, incredibly handsome, cavernous, more humming than boisterous, unfocused but friendly. Think of Hudson Cafeteria as a community center for the privileged. And while the food tries to be more ambitious than its downtown counterpart, Canteen, the stuff that makes the surprisingly diverse customers happiest is beef stew, macaroni and cheese (without the foie gras), and a banana split. It's become very canny to claim discomfort with comfort food, but those eating it here want more and couldn't care less. • 356 W. 58th St. (212-554-6500). (M-E)

Kyma
With Orso perpetually overbooked, the theater district can always use another place for pre-curtain sustenance, and this Aegean addition to Restaurant Row fits the bill, with its nineteen-foot ceilings, sandblasted windows, and the same Lesvos-born executive chef as Ithaka, its West Village sibling. The menu covers all the Peloponnesian bases, from stuffed grape leaves and assorted spreads to clay-pot casseroles, charcoal-broiled fish, and rack of lamb for two. • 300 W. 46th St. (212-957-8830). (M)

La Palapa
The chef at this friendly East Village oasis grew up in Mexico, under the pervasive culinary spell of cookbook author and avid gardener Diana Kennedy, a family friend. That might account for the menu's reliance on fresh herbs, and its creativity. Rices are flavored with tomato, saffron, and tomatillo; moles concocted from sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, and guajillo chiles. The skirt steak soaks up its tequila marinade, cactus comes in a casserole, and chiles rellenos float uncharacteristically in tomato broth. • 77 St. Marks Pl. (212-777-2537). (I-M)

Le Souk
On a rapidly gentrifying Alphabet City block, two Egyptian brothers have carved out their own North African niche and accessorized it with Moroccan tile, glowing lanterns, and camel-skin chairs. A Tunisian chef oversees an evolving menu of assorted tagines and couscous, and meze like calves' liver and Merguez sausage. But food is only half the story. Linger long enough to smoke a hookah and admire the belly dancer. • 47 Ave. B (212-777-5454). (I-M) ($)

★ Le Zinc
Once you open a place like Chanterelle, where do you go from there? If you're Karen and David Waltuck, you head two blocks south and two blocks east to open a casual bistro—the perfect spot to unwind after a long night shaving truffles. The menu, a French framework embellished with Asian, Jewish, and Hungarian highlights, reads like the homespun work of someone who's sown his wild *hautes*: charcuterie, steak-frites, crispy duck wings, Grandma Gaby's stuffed cabbage. A burger, even. And nothing over $19. • 139 Duane St. (212-513-0001). (I-M)

★ Los Dos Molinos
Not since Drew flashed Dave has Manhattan witnessed a hotter display than the one at Los Dos Molinos—the Union Square branch of the popular Arizona restaurant. The slow, satisfying burn begins with chips and fiery salsa and continues with familiar but superlative Mexican-American fare. Entrées like irresistibly hot "adovada" pork ribs come with rice and beans, a good homemade flour tortilla, and an apology in advance printed on the menu: "Sorry we do not provide a mild sauce, I do not know how to make 'mild,'" reads the chef's mission statement–indemnity clause. • 119 E. 18th St. (212-505-1574). (I-M)

★ Mary's Fish Camp
Here's a tip for anyone who's ever paced up and down Cornelia Street waiting for a vacant stool at Pearl Oyster Bar: The West Village is now home to *two* sources of world-class lobster rolls, silken clam chowder, and fragrantly moist, herb-stuffed whole fish. One of Pearl's chef-partners left to open this sunny corner spot equipped with a tin ceiling, a curved stainless-steel counter (ten tables, too), and new additions to the Pearl repertoire, like crispy kernel-studded corn fritters and a lush, sherry-enhanced lobster pot pie. • 246 W. 4th St. (646-486-2185). (M)

Mirchi
A modern Indian restaurant that takes the street out of street food. The main attraction here is an open kitchen equipped with two *tawas*. The large saucer-shaped griddles that look like cast-iron gongs are used to prepare traditional Indian street food like tak-a-tak, a heavily spiced stir-fry of chopped vegetables and herbs, accessorized with chicken, lamb, or chicken liver, and served like tapas with little KFC-style dinner rolls. • 29 Seventh Ave. So. (212-414-0931). (I-M)

★ Mombar
An artist at heart, chef-owner Moustafa El Sayed designed and built this sort of Alice-in-Arabian-Wonderland dedicated to Egyptian clay-pot cookery, where teacups protrude from walls, and tabletops double as canvases for his surrealistic visions. And El Sayed is as creative with food as he is with paint and tile; his menu changes daily, depending on the season and the market. Try the meze plate, or the egga, a sort of Egyptian frittata, and then move on to El Sayed's raison d'être, the all-encompassing clay pot, which on any given night might be filled with stewed rabbit, lamb tagine, or chicken and olives. • 25-22 Steinway St. (718-726-2356). (M)

Nick & Stef's Steakhouse
Los Angeles chef Joachim Splichal opened the first branch of this steakhouse in his hometown, knowing it might play even better in red-meat-loving Manhattan. There's twelve of everything, from salads and starters to potatoes and sauces. And where's the beef? Front and center, hung out to dry in a steel-and-glass aging chamber. • 9 Penn Plaza (212-563-4444). (M-E)

★ Orsay
The new version of *The Exorcist* isn't nearly as chilling as what Jean de Noyer must have gone through ridding the demons from this place. But from the ash of Mortimer's musty chicken hash, Orsay has risen, a brasserie swirling with seductive arches and good cheer, giving the Upper East Side the kind of French tickle it sorely needs. The former regulars never had it so good. Do you think they'd know the diff? • 1057 Lexington Ave., at 75th St. (212-517-6400). (M)

Panino'teca 275
Sometimes Smith Street's great unfed masses crave something they can't find at any one of their cherished bistros. Something light. Something simple. Something delish. To sate those appetites, Kenneth Munz—in between action-packed shifts as Mercer Kitchen's sous chef—helps his wife, Dianna, press bresaola-and-pecorino panini and assemble truffle-cauliflower bruschetta at their comfortable, attractive panini and wine bar, perfect for lazy lingerers. • 275 Smith St., nr. Sackett St. (718-237-2728). (I-M) ($).

Pico
Chef John Villa (JUdson Grill) takes a new old-world approach at Pico, his stylish Portuguese-inspired restaurant in an old Bazzini nut plant in TriBeCa. Proximity to the Hudson befits mostly seafood starters like steamed cockles with fava beans and vinho verde while second courses like spit-roasted suckling pig with a citrus-and-honey glaze marry the rustic with the refined. The blue-and-gold color scheme is not the work of a Michigan State grad, but a tribute to Portugal's ubiquitous palette. • 349 Greenwich St. (212-343-0700). (E)

★ Pipa
Doug Rodriguez has done Nuevo Latino at Patria and Chicama. Now he's tackling old-world Spanish (sort of). A field trip to Galicia yielded dozens of recipes for tapas, casseroles, soups, and flatbreads, all of which undergo subtle and delicious transformation in the chef's inventive hands. To wit: bocarones in escabeche with almond-crusted queso de cabra, crispy anchovies wrapped in sage leaves, and churros with warm chocolate dipping sauce for dessert. Much more radical is the conversion of the old Parlour Cafe into

Ground Rules

These listings are a selective guide to the city's restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. Stars (★) indicate our critics' recommendations, either for outstanding overall quality or in recognition of at least one exceptional feature, and are usually awarded after the restaurant has been formally reviewed. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive; (M) = moderate; (I) = inexpensive. Restaurants listed accept all major credit cards, except where noted; ($) = cash only; "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted card.

The Underground Gourmet

Snack Attacks

Are two heads better than one, or do they just work longer hours? You might want to ask Elias Varkoutas, who opened **Snack**, a Greek vegetarian-takeout shop and grocery in SoHo, a year and a half ago. Since then, he's taken on a partner, expanded his menu, and turned Snack into a full-fledged restaurant—or at least as full-fledged as any ten-seat storefront with a minuscule kitchen can be. Initially, Varkoutas offered classic Greek salads and meze like skordalia and dolmadakia, aiming for the overlooked middle ground between the high-end Periyali and a Formica'd souvlaki joint. Last April, his one-man show doubled in size when he joined forces with Adam Greene, an old friend and former manager at Aquavit and Union Pacific. Gradually, the pair began roasting chickens; selling vaguely Greek, lavishly constructed sandwiches; and cooking homey one-pot meals like lamb stifado and vegetarian moussaka. Last September, they started serving dinner by candlelight, substituting china and silver for lunchtime's paper and plastic but still miraculously maintaining a $10 price ceiling, even for daily specials like veal meatballs and a massive slab of pastitsio. In two months, they should have their wine-and-beer license. Might Snack have outgrown its name? Varkoutas doesn't think so. "The food doesn't have to dictate the name, and the name doesn't have to dictate the food," he says. "Besides, there's the psychological benefit: People can eat whatever they want and still tell themselves, 'I'm just having a snack.' " (105 Thompson Street; 212-925-1040.) R.R.

Photograph by Magdalena Caris.

a seductive Iberian oasis with serrano ham hanging from beams and walls studded with enough shells to stock Sanibel Island. • 38 E. 19th St. (212-677-2233). (M)

★ Quartino

All that separates this rustic Italian osteria and wine bar from the South Street Seaport is a few short blocks and one major mind-set. It's all about the good life, Italian-style, which of course involves wine, served by the mini-carafe; delectable cured meats and imported cheeses; pasta; pizza; strong espresso; and convivial conversation. But amazingly, no smoking. The owners may be Italian, but they're also (with one or two exceptions) doctors. • 21 Peck Slip (212-349-4433). (I–M)

★ Rose Water

Chef-partner Neil O'Malley used to work at Oznot's Dish in Williamsburg, and it shows in his meze platter and lamb brik. But his tenure at Savoy, where he met partner John Tucker, is equally conspicuous. The menu's seasonal fixation guarantees a harvest of white-lightning corn and heirloom tomatoes in the summer. But the careful service, Brooklyn-mellow ambience, and sublime breaded pork chops are good year-round. • 787 Union St. (718-783-3800). (M)

Sabor

As the abiding popularity of tapas proves, grazing never goes out of style. Customize a tiered tray of pan-Latino nibbles like shrimp empanaditas, octopus salad, smoked-chicken croquettes, and tuna seviche and watch the Upper West Side roll by, in all its dog-walking, stroller-pushing glory. • 462 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 82nd St. (212-579-2929). (I–M)

★ A Salt & Battery

The folks from Tea & Sympathy have expanded their British empire with a fish-and-chips shop that literally reeks of authenticity. Aside from the main attraction, properly wrapped in British newspaper, there are mushy peas, pickled onions, Heinz baked beans, and the improbably edible deep-fried Mars Bars. Between orders, a relentlessly cheery staff spouts cockney slang while fry-chef Patsy Carroll—who used to cook in the British Merchant Navy and then, judging by his hoop earrings and Errol Flynn beard, turned pirate—cracks wise. • 112 Greenwich Ave. (212-691-2713). (I–M)

★ Shelly's New York

The latest restaurant Shelly Fireman has created in his own image inhabits the space that was originally an Art Deco–era Horn & Hardart Automat. Only the assimilative Fireman would offer towering shellfish platters alongside newfangled chicken chow mein, barbecued ribs, and a burger audaciously crowned with seared foie gras and make it work. • 104 W. 57th St. (212-245-2422). (M–E)

★ Strip House

The Glazier Group and chef David Walzog, the same team responsible for Tapika, Michael Jordan's, and our slightly lower life expectancy, take a Gallic approach to the New York steakhouse menu with starters like a five-ounce foie gras torchon and sides like goose-fat potatoes and truffled cream spinach. (Try ordering that at Gallagher's.) Meanwhile, designer David Rockwell has given the former Asti's space a saucy new look to go with its naughty new name. • 13 E. 12th St. (212-328-0000). (M–E)

Sushi Samba 7

Co-chefs Eiji Takase and Michael Cressotti bring their innovative Latino-Japanese seviches, samba rolls, and sashimi to a Sheridan Square offshoot big enough to handle the caipirinha-fueled overflow from their Gramercy flagship. There's a sunken cocktail lounge, an oyster bar, and a bold new Brazilian accent, especially in the churrasco a' Rio Grande: a feijoada-inspired fantasy of beef, pork, quail, sausage, rice, beans, greens, and farofa. • 87 Seventh Ave. So. (212-691-7885). (M)

Tao Asian Bistro

The team behind Rue 57 has transformed the old Palace movie house into a pan-Asian place where the terminally indecisive can share spicy lobster roll with black caviar, Shanghai-style soup dumplings, $10-an-ounce Kobe beef with wasabi, and Peking duck. Book the "sky box," a private dining room where the projectionist's booth used to be, and gaze down on the sixteen-foot Buddha, keeping the peace no doubt. • 42 E. 58th St. (212-888-2288). (M)

★ Todd English's Olives NY

Chef Todd English has a genius for artful, HungryMan dishes. He stuffs his pastas with delectable fillings (sweet chestnuts, shredded veal) and slathers them with creamy cheeses. He moulds cupolas of foie gras flan, builds pagodas of hanger steak, constructs pill boxes of tuna tartare with crunchy shrimps buried at the base. It's delicious, but a little overwhelming, especially if you tag on thrombotic desserts like the peppermint bombe (creamy chocolate with mint syrup inside). The cramped, frenetic space (in the lobby of the Union Square W Hotel) makes lunchtimes a more restful experience. • 201 Park Ave. So. (212-353-8345). (E)

★ Viareggio

At first glance, there's little to distinguish this dining room from countless others. But the kitchen's another story. Chef Donato Deserio's deft touch with pastas like creamless rigatoni alla vodka reinvigorates old standards, and entrées like a subtle Parmigiano-Reggiano-crusted chicken breast in white wine taste almost new. As does the *amuse-bouche* of spicy tomato salsa, served with crispy fried- cheese wafers. • 1347 Second Ave., at 71st St. (212-585-2900). (M)

★ Vine

It will take a lot of duck confit with sweet-potato hash to make a village in the canyons of Wall Street. But the bold pioneers at Vine are game to gamble. Their bull-market menu is big on seafood like lobster pan roast with corn fritters and coconut-curried grilled shrimp. There's a quick-service café and grocery next door, and private party space (plus extra lunch seating) downstairs in what used to be, and still resembles, bank vaults. • 25 Broad St. (212-344-8463). (E)

Manhattan

Lower New York

★ Aquagrill

Ever since we tasted chef-owner Jeremy Marshall's inspired falafel-crusted salmon, the notion of a naked pink fillet has been tough to swallow. But despite the high level of cooking, an offbeat and well-priced wine list, and unexpected grace notes like a welcoming *amuse-bouche* and complementary petits fours, it's still a rollicking neighborhood spot, where you can park yourself at the lively bar and watch the dexterous oyster shucker in action. • 210 Spring St. (212-274-0505). (M–E)

★ Balthazar

Keith McNally has countless pacesetting restaurants to his credit, but this is his masterpiece, an evocation of a Paris brasserie that outglows anything within Brie-tossing distance of the Seine. Yet for all its visual impact, Balthazar boasts equally compelling fare: tender braised lamb shoulder gets served over garganelli pasta, shepherd's pie is made with duck, grilled tuna floats over tomato-and-saffron coulis. And its oyster bar, short ribs, bread, and service make you not give a damn whether you ever see the Eiffel Tower. • 80 Spring St. (212-965-1414). (M)

Bayard's
The dining room is stark and commanding, like the setting for an A. R. Gurney play about a reunion in a boys' school. But hardwood, barrel- chaired, shipshape Americana is the other side of the moon compared with your normal restaurant landscape; you have to be in awe of its austerity. Whether you succumb to Eberhard Muller's transformation of Bayard's menu is not as sure a given. One night the honey-mustard glaze on the lamb is enhancing, one night *smothering. Halibut can float on a broth of tarragon,* or sink like the *Andrea Dorea*. This is a potentially great vessel in need of a compass. • One Hanover Square (212-514-9454). (E)

★ Bouley Bakery
Love him or hate him, there's no denying that the famously obstreperous David Bouley—bouncing between this kitchen and Danube—gets the job done. And his loyal clientele gratefully lap it up in the ethereal form of degustation menus revolving around superlative seasonal ingredients like skate steamed with fresh chamomile, say, or organic baby lamb with eggplant moussaka. • 120 W. Broadway (212-964-2525). (M-E)

★ Canteen
It's not that the food is bad; just that it can't compete with the furniture (the orange-wool-upholstered chairs in particular). Executive chef Matthew Kenney has veered off his Mediterranean path to make people-pleasing comfort food like macaroni and cheese, rendered here with Wisconsin Asiago. An abbreviated menu is available late at night, when those fabulous chairs are most in demand. • 142 Mercer St. (212-431-7676). (M)

Capsouto Frères
Landmark French bistro with talked-about soufflés. Flemish-style building hosts local business folks at lunch. Dinner is a New York mix of neighborhood regulars, tourists, and trekkers from uptown. Dishes to try include the terrine Provençal and the roast duckling with ginger-and-cassis sauce. • 451 Washington St. (212-966-4900). (M-E)

★ Chanterelle
The Waltucks, Karen and David, have specific ideas about how to make an evening unforgettable. The walls are without art. You will hear no music. Chairs are huge; plates are, too. The goal is to get you to concentrate solely on who you are with and what you are *about to be presented—the stunning juxtapositions of* David's quail and star anise, lamb with cumin crust, crabs in ginger and strawberry mille-feuille with elderflower sorbet. • 2 Harrison St. at Hudson St. (212-966-6960). (E)

★ City Hall
Chef-owner Henry Meer may be imagineering Old New York, with back-lit photos of bygone street life, but he can't help refining it, too. The triple-tier "Chrysler" shellfish highrise is global gluttony via the jet stream. Chesapeake she-crab soup is creamy perfection. But go for the marvelous double steak on the bone, a behemoth served stunningly rare. • 131 Duane St. (212-227-7777). (M-E)

★ Danube
David Bouley's outrageous, highly lacquered, velvet-swathed, Klimt-deckled little dining room is beautiful, *fun, funny, and romantic. And, via his chef de cuisine,* Mario Lohninger, his bone-marrow dumplings, the Tyrolean wine soup, the braised beef cheeks, and even the Wiener schnitzel manages to be Austro-Hungarian but not too. • 30 Hudson St. (212-791-3771). (E)

Divine Bar
The jewel-toned Financial District branch of the popular Turtle Bay bar and lounge serves the same extensive selection of wine, and a similar menu of appetizer-size plates. Selections include a barbecued-buffalo sandwich, shrimp satay with hoisin sauce, and a wild-mushroom quesadilla. • 55 Liberty St., second floor (212-791-WINE). (I-M)

The Greatest Bar on Earth
This, the most casual component of the Windows on the World complex, has become a popular meeting spot for downtown office workers and, of course, tourists. The view, obviously, can't be beat, and the snacky menu includes bites like fried calamari, barbecued ribs, and sushi. • 1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7000). (M)

☆ Honmura An
While the management doesn't care about your entrance clout at Moomba, it all too obviously plays favorites. Most emphatic, however, is its sanctimoniousness about soba and udon noodles. Still, you won't be disappointed—unless you don't take the menu seriously when it claims that a dish is built around a single giant shrimp. • 170 Mercer St. (212-334-5253). (M-E)

★ The Mercer Kitchen
Within Christian Liagre's conversion of a subterranean catacomb into a sultry, intimately shadowy quartet of fluid yet diverse sectors, executive chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten reveals how a few ingredients can create flavors that are lucid and compelling. Olive and radicchio join stewed rabbit, mint and coriander ring sea bass carpaccio, tomato soup is sparked by chili pepper and crabmeat. You may be sorry you never sprang for that loft on Spring. • 99 Prince St. (212-966-5454). (E)

★ Next Door Nobu
Set in a stunningly clever David Rockwell–designed room as homespun as it is elegant, Nobu Matsuhisa's simpler version of his South American–flecked Asian cooking matches its décor by making Nobu's genius even more accessible. The only thing we'd change is the no-reservations policy. Come early, come late, come on Monday. Come Saturday, if you're nuts. • 105 Hudson St. (212-334-4445). (M-E)

98 Kenmare
A modern American bistro in the old Patrissy's space that features an eclectic international menu. The chef's specialties include barbecued duck in a ginger-scallion pancake; a shrimp-and-mussel chowder with sweet potatoes, coconut, and lime; and five-onion risotto. • 98 Kenmare St. (212-226-2888). (M-E)

★ Nobu
There is not another experience like it in town. Nobu Matsuhisa is a chef of such wondrous originality that nothing on his menu is merely as it reads. Each dish reinvents your definition of what it should taste like. Teensy oysters make your eyes pop. Bonito soothes the throat like sable. Seaweed sparkles. The fake trees aren't necessary. Two bites and you're in Eden. • 105 Hudson St. (212-219-0500). (M-E)

★ Pearl Oyster Bar
Milos may have a fish display as big as this joint's en*tire counter, but nothing can match this kitchen's* preparatory skills. This ain't no Carnival Cruise. Keep your elbows in and your chin down, all the better to acknowledge a clam chowder revved up with smoky bacon, mussels in mustard cream, and a nutty grilled pompano in herbs. • 18 Cornelia St. (212-691-8211). (M)

★ Quilty's
There's something prim and ladylike about the understated room, a muted canvas for chef Katy Sparks's exotic, flavor-saturated cooking: Tamarind-barbecued squab on sweet corn curry. Panko-fried rabbit paillard with jicama-mango slaw. Macaroni with "many cheeses" in an herbed-chili crust. And a scene-stealing twice-baked potato worth ordering the steak for. • 177 Prince St. (212-254-1260). (M-E)

★ 71 Clinton Fresh Food
Is there much call for Scottish salmon wrapped in av*ocado at the intersection of Clinton and Rivington* Streets? Well, yes, judging by the hungry crowd cooling its heels at the bar. Jean Georges alum Wylie Dufresne cooks seemingly complicated, easy-to-eat food like beer-braised short ribs geometrically sculpted into a perfect square; and parsley-root purée with a little parsley-root raft of lump crabmeat. (To eat, capsize and stir.) The chef's dad, a warm and punny presence on the floor, compiled the winning wine list. • 71 Clinton St. (212-614-6960). (M)

★ Wild Blue
It sounds like a bar right outside the NASA compound, but in fact, it's an intimate, upretentious room that doesn't try to compete with the famous view. Chef Michael Lomonaco's menu is solid, superlative American, with a touch of the steak house in side dishes like creamed spinach and butternut-squash hash. Don't wait for a special occasion to take the 107-flight elevator ride. • 1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7107). (E)

Windows on the World
Yes, tourists love it. But Michael Lomanaco's sophisticated American food, including stout-braised Black Angus short ribs and lobster potpie with truffle cream manages to steal some attention away from the main attraction, that spectacular view of Manhattan Island. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's 60,000-bottle wine cellar. • 1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (212-524-7000). (E)

☆ Zoë
The tables here are always jumping, cranked up with the buzz of post-orgasmic shoppers and SoHo tourists savvy enough to find their way to some of the best fussy American food in New York. Chef Kevin Reilly, whose mission is to keep the prize-winning all-American wine list in mind as he designs the menu, is properly obsessed with seasonal ingredients. And just-baked cookies, still warm from the oven, evoke memories of Mom. • 90 Prince St. (212-966-6722). (M-E)

Below 14th Street, East

★ Bond Street
The crowd is too cool, the rooms too cozy, the waiters way too pretty. No way is this anywhere you're going to get chirashi worth much more than a can of Bumble Bee. Boy, are you about to be surprised. With food this fresh, original, and vibrantly spiced, the kitchen can easily take on most traditional midtown sushi houses and wouldn't have to walk out of a room backwards if Nobu's troops were in attendance. • 6 Bond St. (212-777-2500). (M-E)

★ Five Points
Every neighborhood needs a place with a good bar, a serious kitchen, and zero pretensions. NoHo has one in this Med-American restaurant, where a split log running down the center of the dining room conveys a babbling brook. Zen though that may sound, chef Marc Meyer's hearty cooking is more boldly passionate than coolly contemplative. Duck-and-foie gras sausage and wood-oven roasted Magret duck show enough spikiness to make you look down and go "hmmmm" before you go back to the conversation. • 31 Great Jones St. (212-253-5700). (M)

★ Gotham Bar & Grill
Alfred Portale created a restaurant where anyone, dressed any way, is invited with affability to partake of *his talent for making American cuisine exciting and as* easy to fathom as a burger and fries. Even when faced with soft-shell crabs or squab, say, topped with potato purée and fava beans for the first time, Gotham customers attack their plates with a fearlessness suited to Great Adventure. Actually, this is a great adventure. • 12 E. 12th St. (212-620-4020). (E)

★ Il Bagatto
Though so dark the menu can hardly be read and so deliriously energized you'd best be in the mood for a nonvintage bottle of red, Il Bagatto piles on super pastas, salads, and antipasti as full of sharp left hooks as that wine and as cheap as the hangover you'll have tomorrow. • 192 E. 2nd St. (212-228-0977). (I-M)

★ Leshko's
The design team behind Moomba and Veruka have given this former Ukrainian greasy spoon a new look (kind of Frank Lloyd Wright meets Greg Brady's attic-bachelor pad). That, and creatively prepared American comfort food attract a hip crowd that doesn't mind being squeezed together like straphangers. Almost nothing of the old Leshko's remains, except, maybe, the pierogi, though they've gotten a makeover too: They're potato-stuffed, sauteed and served on a bed of fennel, leeks, and mushrooms. • 111 Avenue A (212-777-2111). (I-M)

Osso Buco
Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and

T-bone steak. • 88 University Pl. (212-645-4525). Also, 1662 Third Ave., at 93rd St. (426-5422). (M)

☆ Prune
There's not a wrinkled plum in sight at this American bistro. But chef Gabrielle Hamilton's childhood nickname indicates the sort of unpretentious home cooking at which she excels, a grab bag of eccentric, multicultural influences that is, at heart, American—as any place whose quirky bar menu includes Triscuits alongside serrano ham with fresh figs must be. Minus the traditional categories for appetizers, main courses, and sides, the menu gives as prominent placement to vegetables like creamed corn and roasted beets as to the more entrée-ish capon on a savory garlic crouton, or the pastrami duck breast with a rye-flavored, fried-shallot omelet. • 54 E. 1st St. (212-677-6221). (M)

★ 2nd Avenue Deli
A recent facelift struck fear in the hearts of those who believe that a true pastrami sandwich must be authenticated by grimy Formica and generations' worth of atmospheric shabbiness. But so far, so good. This East Village landmark continues to draw dedicated fressers with its great fries, chicken in the pot, the near-lethal hush puppy (a frank in a potato knish), and the hard-boiled service. • 156 Second Ave. (212-677-0606). (I–M)

Siren
Aside from some strange and funny cabaret acts and a D.J. spinning to a boisterous young crowd, the spotlight at this East Village mini supper club is on chef Patrick Fromm's accomplished French-and-Asian-accented American cooking. Try the triple-tiered appetizer trays the menu calls "trilogies," which include a choice of everything from spicy "lollipop" wings to foie gras to sashimi, or opt for more substantial fare like homemade tagliolini with wild mushrooms and barbecued filet mignon. • 12 St. Marks Place (212-995-9100). (M–E)

Below 14th Street, West

★ Babbo
Ever try goat cheese tortellini dusted in dried orange and wild fennel pollen? Or spicy lamb sausage romanced by mint love letters and a paste of sweet peas? Get ready to crave them. Ingredients you didn't expect or never heard of become unforgettable. Mario Batali's original yet airy Italian cooking will stun, fool, bewitch and ultimately obsess you. Just get it together to make another reservation before you leave. • 110 Waverly Pl. (212-777-0303). (E)

★ Blue Ribbon Bakery
Don't be hoodwinked by what looks like one more brick-walled Village joint with first-come-first-serve seating and a brunch menu. Instead, focus on the intriguing all-over-the-place menu's superb steak tartare, perfectly smoked sable, a butcher's plate to shame most Italian antipasti, a BLT that really is a meal. And can you pass up anywhere that can still make a root-beer float? • 33 Downing St. (212-337-0404). (M)

★ Da Silvano
Few of the fervent regulars here—including the city's media, fashion, and art-world elite—seem to recall an Italian restaurant whose menu wasn't sopping in red sauce before Da Silvano. The roasted standing duck is crackling, the lamb tender and moist, the artichoke salad as brash as the air around Montecatini. And not an eggplant-parmigiana hero in sight. • 260 Sixth Ave. (212-982-2343). (M–E)

★ Fressen
The three rooms are as spacious and sleek as an Audi TT. And considering the trendificant meat packing setting and the priorities of nightly revelers, the house could have gotten away with a post-Cosmo menu of meager-morseled pizzas or duck burritos. Instead, they've opted for a selection of semi-organic dishes like escabeche of sardines or a mullet pot-au-feu. And rather than being somewhere hip, you actually feel hip, thanks to the refreshingly congenial staff. • 421 W. 13th St. (212-645-7775). (M–E)

☆ 'ino
Named for panino, this cozy nook excels at crafting perfect Italian snacks to nibble with wine: crustless tramezzini, pressed panini, and bruschetta, all on great bread and enlivened by zesty condiments. Supplement your sandwich with a bowl of olives and a plate of cheese, and keep the motif going with a Nutella panino for dessert. Best of all, it's open for business from early morning until after midnight. • 21 Bedford St. (212-989-5769). (I) ($).

★ Lupa
We love this down-home Roman trattoria and not just for Mario Batali's celebration of odd animal parts and Italian delicatessen, or for partner Joe Bastianich's bid to bring depth and finesse to a casual Village joint's wine service. We like the mood, the food, and the gentle prices, but so do legions of tuned-in New Yorkers. It's almost as tough a sanctum to crack as its pricier sibling, Babbo. • 170 Thompson St. (212-982-5089). (M)

★ Meigas
The décor is a little goofy and the location, on Hudson Street, in the Siberia of West SoHo, is a bust. But chef Luis Bollos's kitchen produces the best Spanish cuisine (Galician, actually) in town. In his hands, hefty dishes like braised oxtail croquettes and roast suckling pig appear light, almost candied. His gazpacho—a light confection, loaded with Maine lobster—makes the usual approximations of this dish look like crankcase oil. Trendy Iberian jellies and foams are mostly relegated to dessert, of which a wondrous chocolate layer ganache is best. • 350 Hudson St. (212-627-5800). (M–E)

Osteria Fiorentina
Live piano and violin music lend this casual Italian restaurant that old-time Village ambience. The menu offers standards like risotti, open ravioli, zuppa di clams, and veal chops. • 281 Bleecker St. (212-633-2941). (M)

★ Pastis
Keith McNally's Pastis looks more like a grander Lucky Strike than a repro of the visually faultless Balthazar, but not only does the slight downshifting make perfect sense; considering the tallow-rivulet-ribboned neighborhood, it also renders the new place instantly less imposing. Service is breezier, the crowd more genially noisy, and the only thing disappointing is that you don't live closer. • 9 Ninth Ave. (212-929-4844). (M)

★ Peanut Butter & Co.
Smooth or chunky is only the beginning: Savor the sticky stuff 21 different ways at this kitschy café, where you're transported back to elementary school with one bite of "ants on a log," celery sticks slathered with the peanut butter of your choice and studded with raisins. Request your Elvis (grilled peanut butter, banana, honey, bacon) on whole wheat if you must, though we're certain the King would disapprove. There must be a mom in the kitchen; sandwiches come with chips and carrot sticks, and they'll even cut off the crusts for you. • 240 Sullivan St. (212-677-3995). (I–M)

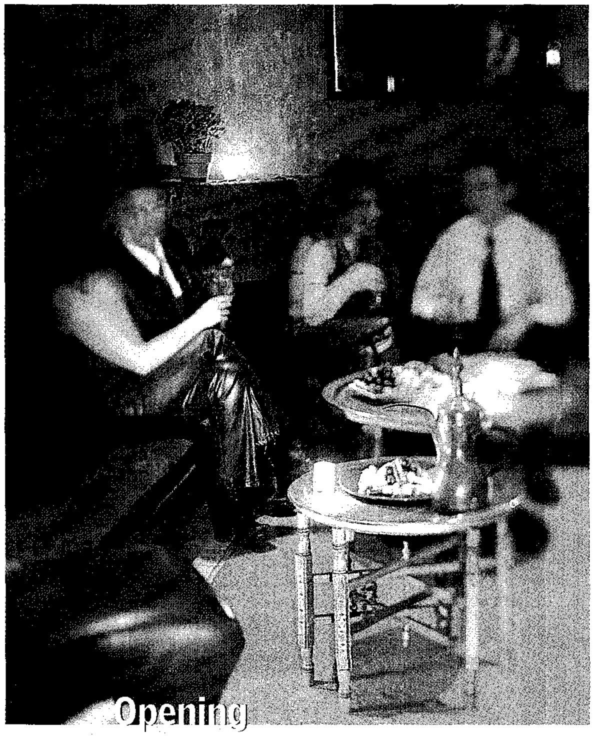
14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Back Porch
An ideal spot for Murray Hill residents to meet for drinks alfresco and southwestern-flavored fare. • 488 Third Ave., at 33rd St. (212-685-3828). (I)

Bambou
A hint of the tropics on 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like crab cakes with avocado and molasses or eggplant soup with coconut and curry amid a relaxing, palm-fronded bar and dining room. • 243 E. 14th St. (212-358-0012). (M)

★ Campagna
The far-too-cautious interior is woefully inappropriate preparation for the whoops of joy that routinely erupt when patrons sample Mark Strausman's gleefully game sense of Italian cuisine. The lobster broth in his cacciucco is a blast. And his grandma's lasagna makes you sorry you never met the old girl. • 24 E. 21st St. (212-460-0900). (E)

★ Chicama
Douglas Rodriguez is so disarmingly inventive that he could serve his spectacular seviches, his drippingly seductive goat stew, and his daunting, did-Mom-ever-make-it-like-this? suckling pig from a lean-to in Union Square and there'd be no room left



Opening

Hard Rock Café

Vasilis "Bill" Katehis continues to mine his busy corner of the Upper West Side—literally. The owner of both the seafood-centric Aegean and Metsovo, the "mountain Greek" restaurant next door, dug twenty inches below the basement of the latter until he hit bedrock, and the resulting excavated chunk of Manhattan geology has been transformed into the waterfall centerpiece of **Shalel**, a subterranean grotto strewn with rose petals and votive candles. (Egyptian light fixtures and a Bedouin tent are en route.) The smallish North African-inspired menu offers shareable finger food like Tunisian savory pastries and Moroccan-lamb briouts, and heartier entrées like thin-sliced lamb "sirloin" with a succulent stew of spinach, chickpeas, and tomato ($9 to $23). (65½ West 70th Street; 212-799-9030.)

Photograph by Kenneth Chen.

for the other vendors. Instead, he inhabits a rustic dream hut that takes you somewhere north of Brazil, east of Mardi Gras, and south of Heaven. • 35 E. 18th St. (212-505-2233). (M–E)

★ City Bakery
No one comes close to Maury Rubin at satisfying our grown-up snacking impulse. Heavenly tarts, perfectly textured cookies and brownies, lusciously tart lemonades, ultra-thick and creamy hot chocolate—even homemade marshmallows—beckon irresistibly from the counter. Pre-dessert, there are inspired sandwiches like roasted pear and ricotta salata and the only salad bar we obsess over. • 22 E. 17th St. (212-366-1414). (I–M)

Commodore Grill at the Grand Hyatt Hotel
Commuters and business travelers can enter this formal hotel restaurant directly from Grand Central Terminal, for a quick drink in the cigar bar or a full meal from the French-influenced American menu. • 42nd St. and Lexington Ave. (212-850-5999). (M–E)

★ Cosette
Everything about this humble 30-seat restaurant is unswervingly Gallic, from the Côtes du Rhône table red to the menu (a *Gruyère-crusted brandade de morue*, rich onion soup, flaky pissaladière, textbook juicy steak-frites). Everything, that is, except for the host's friendly manner and the West African chef. Cosette is exactly what every neighborhood should be lucky enough to have: an affordable French bistro with consistently well-executed food and a comfortable, low-key atmosphere. • 163 E. 33rd St. (212-889-5489). (M)

★ Eleven Madison Park
While this soaringly grand space in the MetLife lobby will never be a room for clandestine assignations, the compensating grace of the staff, and simple but big-flavored dishes—capon stuffed with pistachio and garlic, cod with sausage and mustard greens that don't get lost in the landscape—make it a vibrant place to do business and an incredibly sensible choice for the family. • 11 Madison Ave. (212-889-0905). (E)

★ Gyroland
Is it a slice joint, a Greek coffee shop, a neon sign store, or all of the above? While this brightly lit restaurant may suffer from a mild identity crisis, torn between serving strictly Turkish fare and appeasing the neighborhood clientele of hospital workers and police cadets with pizza and cheese-steak sandwiches, it's also an undersung source for fresh and delicious meze, doner kebab, kofte, lahmacun, and pide. The cops don't know what they're missing. • 351 Second Ave., nr. 20th St. (212-254-3200). (I)

Madison Bistro
What every neighborhood needs: a casual spot for French classics like escargots, steak-frites, and bouillabaisse. Open-faced sandwiches called tartines are available at the bar, as are rustic French wines poured from imported oak barrels. • 238 Madison Ave., nr. 37th St. (212-447-1919). (M)

Meli Melo
This cheerful neighborhood spot offers a very reasonable fixed-price dinner—$31.50 for four courses. The seafood-heavy French menu has Asian and Mediterranean touches in dishes like seared tuna with baby bok choy and rack of lamb with couscous. • 110 Madison Ave., nr. 29th St. (212-686-5551). (M)

Metronome
This lofty Flatiron space is well suited to private functions, but even the lone diner will find the Deco design welcoming and the food—riffs on a Mediterranean theme like "pinchos" of vegetables with goat cheese, and za'atar-crusted rack of lamb—satisfying. Live jazz performed Wednesday through Saturday. • 915 Broadway, at 21st St. (212-505-7400). (M)

Mi
A talented team of cooks with impressive-sounding résumés (Mercer Kitchen, Hatsuhana) collaborate on a menu including sushi and sashimi, pad Thai, Malaysian spare ribs, and Korean bibimbob at this four-flavor pan-Asian restaurant. • 66 Madison Ave., nr. 27th St. (212-252-8888). (M–E)

Mizu Sushi
The owners of River, uptown's Thai-Vietnamese hybrid, have let the culinary current take them south to Gramercy Park and entirely new Asian territory. Contemporary materials like slate and stainless steel are softened by a series of rice-paper-wrapped oak frames, some of them fashioned into a "palm tree" centerpiece. And though the menu hews to tradition, the sushi chef has some tricks up his sleeve, like the Crazy Roll of tempura-breaded spicy tuna with flying fish roe. • 29 E. 20th St. (212-505-6688). (M)

★ Tabla
It's diminishing to categorize Floyd Cardoz's clean Goan-spiced Maine crab cake or his exquisite pairing of seared foie gras with a black-pepper-and-pear compote as nouvelle Delhi; he's gone and forged a deliriously satisfying union of this country's produce with the strong, heady spices and bewitchingly pungent condiments of his homeland. A less expensive menu at the Bread Bar downstairs aspires less to break new ground than to rekindle old taste memories—specifically Cardoz's, including his mom's recipe for beef assad, otherwise known as "Indian pot roast." • 11 Madison Ave. (212-889-0667). (M–E)

★ Tocqueville
At the loveliest new mom and pop shop in town, Marco Moreira and Jo-Ann Markovitzky have taken what they've learned from a decade of catering and added to it all the things they couldn't do in someone else's home to come up with a gently idiosyncratic nook that will take about twenty minutes to charm you. • 15 E. 15th St. (212-647-1515). (M–E)

★ Union Pacific
A dramatic otherworldly rain-forest setting is a fitting stage for wunderkind turned matinee idol Rocco DiSpirito's wildly inventive, wonderfully weird cooking. Sweet, small scallops nuzzled in their shells by blobs of sea urchin with an essence of tomato, mustard oil, mirin and black mustard. Halibut braised in goose fat with ginger jus and shallot cracklings. Mango and papaya carpaccio with pineapple sherbet and candied cilantro. Do these sound like the delusions of a madman? In less capable hands, maybe; in DiSpirito's, it's pure genius.
• 111 E. 22nd St. (212-995-8500). (E)

★ Veritas
Does the wine list make the restaurant? Luckily, if you've got a chef like Scott Bryan whipping up arctic-char carpaccio with warm fingerling potato salad and a sublime, marrow-and-wine-fortified fillet of beef, it doesn't have to. His elegant American fare ($68 prix fixe only) perfectly complements the massive cellar, a joint obsession of the owners, who seem to take intense pleasure in sharing their private collection with the paying public. • 43 E. 20th St. (212-353-3700). (E)

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar
This national chain invades Manhattan's freshly scrubbed and reinvented 42nd Street with an eager-to-please, affordable menu heavy on burgers, steak, and fajitas. • 234 W. 42nd St. (212-391-7414). (I–M)

★ Mesa Grill
It's a clumsy room. But just keep your head down and don't stop eating—Bobby Flay's mastery of the spicier things in life keeps getting more polished and exciting. Ribs, tomato-tortilla soup, shrimp-and-corn tamale, blue-corn-crusted snapper, and pan-roasted rabbit—eat here, and you'll ramble on too—are just sensational. Flay's gonna rope you in, and leave you hog-tied and smiling. • 102 Fifth Ave. (212-807-7400). (E)

Opening

Dine by the Sword

D'Artagnan is the name of Dumas's dueling hero, but among New York chefs and gourmands it's probably better known as the preeminent purveyor of luscious foie gras and imported wild game. This week, partners Ariane Daguin and George Faison expand their epicurean realm with **D'Artagnan, The Rotisserie**, a midtown duplex where valiant office musketeers can repair for the company's signature terrines and charcuterie, plus seriously rib-sticking Gascon fare like cassoulet, spit-roasted free-range chicken, and "la garbure et son chabrot," a duck-confit soup dense enough to be eaten with a fork—or, according to the menu, drunk "like a true Gascon," directly from the bowl. The long, narrow, high-ceilinged space has been countrified with tiled floors, rough ocher walls, a communal table, and Basque dishware and linens. Daguin (seated left, with third partner Lise Winicki) is importing wine biscuits baked by her sister, and even the proper, stemless glasses for Armagnac blanc, the vodka of Gascony. "Unfortunately, the chef is from Nice," she laments, "but we're drilling Gascony into him." (152 East 46th Street; 212-687-0300.)

Photograph by Bruce Katz.

Ohm
An all-in-one entertainment center offering dinner, dancing, and the ever-popular lounging on velvet furniture. Plus an eclectic menu including sesame chicken tenders, Black Angus steak, and grilled salmon with lemon-caper beurre blanc. • 16 W. 22nd St. (212-229-2000). (M–E)

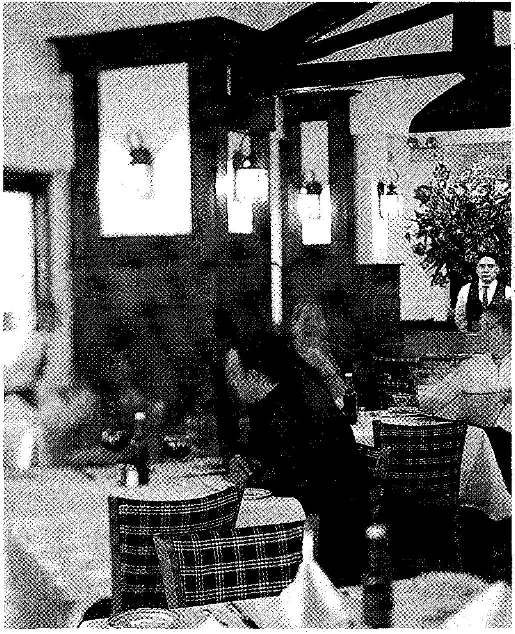
★ The Red Cat
Not every artist is starving, and the ones with bank accounts and hearty appetites would do well to make this their home away from home among the West Chelsea galleries. Hanging lanterns, barn siding, and artwork contribute to the funky décor, and the bar is the roomy, welcoming sort that solo diners find appealing. It's hard to find a clunker on the Med-American menu. The quick saute of zucchini with toasted almonds is something your mother would never have imagined—a vegetable that could spoil your appetite. • 227 Tenth Ave., nr. 23rd St. (212-242-1122). (M)

Simply Pasta
Perfectly situated for pretheater, this moderately priced Northern Italian restaurant has a specialty martini list, and offers such dependable, fresh fare as Caesar salad, osso buco, and pastas—over two dozen of them. • 120 W. 41st St. (212-391-0805). (I)

World Yacht Dining Cruises
Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—and sup on a selection from the "Best of New York" menu: featuring dishes based on recipes from the Sea Grill's Ed Brown and Aquavit's Marcus Samuelsson among others. Jacket required. • Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (212-630-8100). (E)

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Avra
Just as they are uptown at sister restaurant Trata, Fulton Street–fresh whole fish are priced here by the pound and described on the menu the way some restaurants' wine lists like to talk about their wines. *Barbounia*, for example, is a "Mediterranean delicacy that tends to be bony but flavorful." Elsewhere on the menu, spinach pie goes Gallic as spanakopita napoleon and grape leaves get an unexpected stuffing of raw salmon, tuna, and cucumber. • 141 E. 48th St. (212-759-8550). (M–E)



★ Brasserie
Nostalgists may have wished for a clone of the original Brasserie. This ain't it. But the redesign is stunning and the big-brother video screens make as much of your entrance as those bygone steps used to. The classic French food (think onion soup, duck cassoulet, mandatory beignets) is satisfying and served nearly continuously from breakfast through late night—a welcome anomaly in this otherwise early-to-bed precinct. • 100 E. 53rd St. (212-751-4840). (M–E)

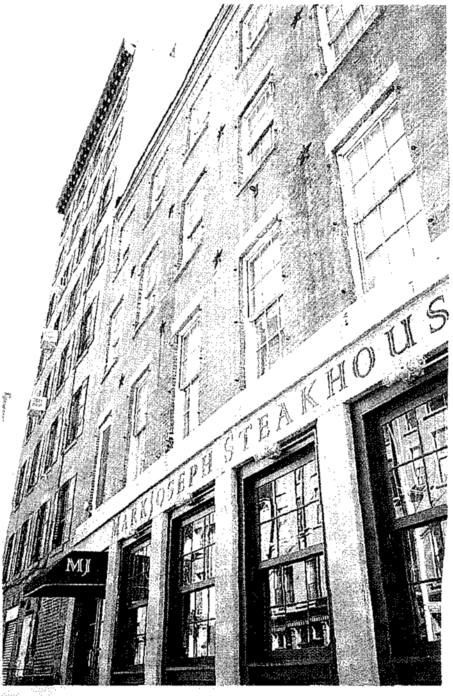
Café Centro
A big, shiny brasserie-cum-café in the lobby of the MetLife Building; there's inventive cooking going on here, and the joint is as fun and good as non-expensive midtown gets. In the loud little Beer Bar, get one of the best hamburgers in town. Closed Sunday. • 200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (212-818-1222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.

★ Della Femina
It might be easier to score a table here than at the infamous ad man's East Hampton address, but don't read too much into that: the souped-up seasonal American menu tastes just as good in the 212 area code. There's a little country and a little city in his cold corn soup with black truffle coulis, and Dover sole "fish sticks" with a caviar remoulade. And you can almost smell Georgica beach in the lobster roll. • 131 E. 54th St. (212-752-0111). (E)

Divine Bar
This East Side establishment is all things to all people: a cigar bar, a wine bar, a tapas lounge, and a casual, couch-filled living room where local office workers can often be found unwinding. • 244 E. 51st St. (212-319-9463). (I–M)

Openings

Strip Search



With steakhouses opening fast enough to confound Ray Kroc, Manhattan seems to have become a meat market unto itself. The two newest entrants on the beef battlefield occupy opposite corners of town but share a common goal: to serve USDA prime with a smile instead of the stereotypically crusty service that often accompanies the creamed spinach and hash browns. Uptown, owner Marc Roth remade what was briefly Montana into **Roth's Westside Steakhouse** (at left; 680 Columbus Avenue, at 93rd Street; 212-280-4103) but kept chef Neal Myers on, encouraging him to create signature steaks like the carpetbagger (double sirloin stuffed with oysters) and the Bear Mountain filet, fortified with blue cheese and walnuts in a Cabernet reduction. Downtown, in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge, **MARKJOSEPH Steakhouse** specializes in porterhouse for two, three, or four, served family-style and ritually baptized with pooled juices. If that sounds familiar to habitués of that steak shrine across the river, it's no coincidence—the general manager and a cadre of remarkably friendly waiters came straight from Peter Luger, and brought their meal-ending schlag with them. (261 Water Street; 212-277-0020.)

★ Fresco
A family restaurant thriving on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx one can understand. But in midtown? Yet, the Scotto clan strolls around the bustling dining room, cajoling, nudging, hugging, ordering on top of your ordering, as if you'd shown up at their house for leftovers the day after Thanksgiving. For them, Fresco is one big welcome mat. Doesn't matter that the pizza is to die for, the lasagna superb; and if you like liver, you may never want to leave. • 34 E. 52nd St. (212-935-3434). (M–E)

L'Actuel
Mosaic tiles, sand-blasted mirrors, beechwood accents, and mohair and suede upholstery lift this French restaurant located at the Kimberly out of hotel-restaurant anonymity. Equally enticing are Michelin-starred chef Jean-Yves Schillinger's grazing menu: foie gras with black cherries, marinated shrimp skewers, excellent tartes flambées, plus a full raw bar. • 145 E. 50th St. (212-583-0001). (M–E)

★ Le Cirque 2000
Longtime chef Sottha Khunn has surrendered his whisk to new top toque Pierre Schaedelin, and the tension is palpable: What's the Alsatian recruit have in store for us? Sirio Maccioni rarely makes a mistake when it comes to staffing his world-famous kitchen, and this guy comes with all the right (Michelin-starred) credentials. Let's see what they whip up. • 455 Madison Ave. (212-303-7788). (E)

★ Le Périgord
A recent renovation did nothing to disguise the comforting, cosseting old-world feel of this Sutton Place landmark, where tuxedo'd captains oversee tableside service and remind you to order your Grand Marnier soufflé at the same time as your dinner. And new chef Jacques Qualin (Jean Georges) is not opposed to bathing veal chops in yogurt-lemon sauce or molding a salmon fillet into the shape of a petite mignon. He's a wizard with lighter dishes as well, like turbot (with a lacy glaze of comte cheese) and a succession of luminous soups. Try the Floating Island for dessert, but be sure to dress in proper attire, or owner Georges Briguet will banish you to the back room. • 405 E. 52nd St. (212-755-6244). (E)

The Leopard
This townhouse restaurant named for the famous Italian novel is known for its bargain four-course prix fixe, including unlimited house wine. The enclosed garden and the French-Continental menu—roast duckling, stuffed quail, filet mignon—attract a loyal following. • 253 E. 50th St. (212-759-3735). (M–E)

Photographs by Kenneth Chen.

☆ **Lespinasse**
Old-fashioned, luxurious hotel dining is not everyone's idea of fun these days—even with the possibility of a noontime flirtation and posh hotel rooms so handy. But chef Christian Delouvrier's cooking is anything but a bore. His butternut squash soup is revved up with chunks of duck breast and crusty foie gras, lamb rack and loin is touched with Chartreuse and coffee, and baby pig with cassoulet is carefully sauced to keep it from getting too rustically porky. With inventive cooking like this, even the recently redone room—so French and namby-pamby when it ought to be robber-baron American—seems pleasantly mellowed. • 2 E. 55th St., in the St. Regis Hotel (212-339-6719). (E)

Nino's Positano
An upscale Italian restaurant specializing in food from the southern regions, Positano in particular. Pastas range from the simple (fusilli with tomato-basil sauce) to the more complex (Cognac-infused seafood risotto), and main courses traverse similar territory. • 890 Second Ave., nr. 47th St. (212-355-5540). (M)

★ **Oyster Bar**
Unperturbed by the arriviste competition in the food court next door, the jewel of the pre-renovation Terminal continues to serve superlative pan roasts and clam chowders, and an overwhelming assortment of East and West Coast oysters. The sprawling subterranean space has the hustle-bustle feel of a cafeteria, which its snaking counters resemble, but don't be fooled—you pay for the privilege of eating under that vaulted tile ceiling. • Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (212-490-6650). (M–E)

★ **Peacock Alley**
In this cushioned cocoon of a dining room off the lobby of the Waldorf Astoria, chef Laurent Gras—a disciple of Alain Ducasse—offers diners a chance to mix and match bite-size "courses" chosen from categories like Ocean and River, Field and Forest, and Farm. Or put yourself entirely in his hands with the seven-course "tête à tête" menu, each streamlined dish composed of just two ingredients achieving, in Gras's words, a "single clean note." • 301 Park Ave., in the Waldorf-Astoria (212-872-4895). (E)

Pig 'n' Whistle on Third
There's plenty of convivial Irish-pub-style cheer in this East Side spinoff of a popular midtown haunt. The basic American menu offers staples like shepherd's pie, barbecued ribs, and onion loaf. Live music Saturday night, and "Irish breakfast" brunch on weekends. • 922 Third Ave., nr. 55th St. (212-688-4646). (I–M)

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

Adrienne
Maybe you're not an out-of-towner on a spending spree, but you can pretend to be at this posh hotel restaurant overlooking a particularly swank stretch of Fifth Avenue. Chef Oliver Dudler's modern French menu changes seasonally, and incorporates to-be-expected luxury ingredients like lobster (in a trio of soups), foie gras (with red-onion compote), and poached Dover sole. The $50 prix fixe dinner is a (relative) steal. • 700 Fifth Ave., at 55th St., in the Peninsula (212-903-3918). (M–E)

Bello
Locals flock here for generous portions of well-priced Northern Italian served in a casually elegant atmosphere. Free parking with dinner after 5 P.M. • 863 Ninth Ave., at 56th St. (212-246-6773). (M)

Bombay Palace
This newly refurbished, elegant Indian restaurant has been serving its refined versions of tandoori lobster, lamb kandhari, and chicken kashmiri to a midtown office crowd for years. Try the excellent Indian breads. • 30 W. 52nd St. (212-541-7777). (M)

Da Rosina
A convenient pretheater location, specializing in homemade pasta and other Italian fare, like baked polenta marinara and veal scallopine. Try the $20.99 prix fixe dinner. • 342 W. 46th St. (212-977-7373). (M)

Ellen's Stardust Diner
A tribute to that archetype of mid-century American gastronomy, this themey theater-district diner serves up iconic nourishment, from the meat-loaf platter to the "Gina Lola Brigetta" lasagna. • 1650 Broadway, at 51st St. (212-956-5151). (I–M)

☆ **Island Burgers and Shakes**
This Hell's Kitchen storefront with a Southern California-vibe specializes in burgers and chicken sandwiches, or churascos, in countless combinations and served on great bread and with superior condiments. A blackened churasco is almost painfully spicy and needs only minor embellishment (some blue cheese, or avocado and Monterey jack) to gain admission into our sandwich hall of fame. Great malteds douse the flames. • 766 Ninth Ave., nr. 51st St. (212-307-7394). (I) ($).

☆ **JUdson Grill**
It's a room so vast and vaulted you expect them to be announcing Trailways departures. But chef Bill Telepan's cooking, propelled by a rousing level of confidence in bold flavors and pairings, matches the bravura of the room. With blithe deftness, he makes the familiar seem fresh. Crab cakes get dashed with lemon verbena, chickpea soup tickles insidiously, and loin of pork with apple compote will leave you happy. • 152 W. 52nd St. (212-582-5252). (E)

La Veranda
Northern Italian food. A popular theater district spot offering generous portions of fish, seafood, veal chops, and pasta and brunch on weekends. Free parking (with dinner) from 5 P.M. to 1 A.M. • 163 W. 47th St. (212-391-0905). (M)

★ **Le Bernardin**
Criticizing Le Bernardin is like analyzing rainbows. Just try to describe the snapper in coconut milk or the black bass with truffles and celery root. No matter what you say, you sound like a fool. Submit to the sorcery of chef Eric Ripert, the bewitchery of owner and co-creator Maguy Le Coze, and experience the thrilling sensation of having everything that surrounds you perfect. • 155 W. 51st St. (212-489-1515). (E)

★ **Local**
If your idea of Theater District dining is a lackluster prix fixe, this stylish newcomer and its focused, flavorful cooking will open your eyes—and with entrées venturing into the mid-thirty-dollar range—your wallet. Previously seen stirring the pots for Ron Perelman, chef Franklin Becker has the knack. We're particularly fond of his Vidalia onion and black olive tart, and knockout sea scallops riding a crab cake. • 224 W. 47th St. (212-921-2005). (M–E)

Martini's
Convenient for pre- and post-theater dining, with a buzzing sidewalk café and rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and, of course, multiple variations of the house drink. • 810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (212-767-1717). (M)

Palio
Stylish midtown duplex restaurant, with a famous ground-floor muraled bar depicting the Palio race and elegant preparations of Italian dishes like sliced hen pheasant on salad with white truffles, and monkfish ravioli with asparagus and fresh tomato. Jacket required. • 151 W. 51st St. (212-245-4850). (E)

Randolph's
Housed in the Warwick Hotel—which William Randolph Hearst built for his mistress, Marion Davies—this cozy restaurant and lounge has a lush, old-world feel and an eclectic menu of international snacks and entrées, from dim sum to a filet mignon sandwich. • 65 W. 54th St. (212-247-2700). (M–E)

★ **Redeye Grill**
This place jumps late at night with live jazz, a cacophony of paintings by artists those latter-day Duveens Saatchi and Giuliani have yet to discover, and a fine smoked-fish platter, plus the town's quintessential cobb salad. • 888 Seventh Ave., at 56th St. (212-541-9000). (M–E)

St. Andrews
In what might be New York's only full-fledged Scottish restaurant, the bartenders wear kilts, the scotch is single-malt, and the décor revolves around pictures of famous golf courses. The hearty steak-and-seafood menu features rack of lamb and brook trout stuffed with crabmeat and Irish oatmeal in a scotch-whiskey sauce. • 120 W. 44th St. (212-840-8413). (I–M)

The Supper Club
Dine, dance, and dress up at this Art Deco re-creation of a forties-era supper club, complete with a seventeen-piece big band and culinary classics like oysters Rockefeller, lobster thermidor, and Dover sole à la meunière. • 240 W. 47th St. (212-921-1940). (M–E)

Trattoria dell'Arte
Follow the giant white plaster nose that looms above the entrance to Trattoria dell'Arte like a Route 66 roadside diner icon, for the restaurant's unmatched antipasto bar, crackling pizzas, and consistently reliable kitchen. The Milton Glaser-designed space is a packed power scene at lunch, and a boon for nearby Carnegie Hall concert goers. • 900 Seventh Ave., nr. 56th St. (212-245-9800). (M–E)

'21' Club
You no longer need to wear a necktie at lunch, and chef Erik Blauberg has, gasp, slightly modernized the country-club-classic menu— try the foie gras with black mission figs and pomegranate and the crispy black sea bass with champagne sauce. But the tablecloths at this famous Prohibition-era speakeasy are still red and white, toys still hang from the ceiling, Nixon's wine is still in the vaults, if that gives you a thrill, and, in spite of the lunchtime dress code, the crowd here doesn't have anything against neckties. • 21 W. 52nd St. (212-582-7200). (E)

Utsav Festive India
The bar of this regional Indian restaurant is located at street level while the contemporary dining room is built into a bridge spanning two midtown skyscrapers. The lunch buffet costs only $11.95, and à la carte entrées include ginger rack of lamb, tandoori filet mignon, and Bengali fish paturi. • 1185 Sixth Ave., nr. 46th St. (212-575-2525). (M)

Zanzibar
The crowd at this loungy Hell's Kitchen restaurant is as eclectic as the menu. African, Arabic, Asian, and Mediterranean touches appear in dishes like tuna and ginger ravioli; mussel soup with garlic, chickpeas, and cilantro; and a root vegetable and peanut stew served over rice. • 645 Ninth Ave, nr. 45th St. (212-957-9197). (M)

57th–60th Streets

Dawat
You can't miss with tandoori—cooked before your eyes in the big ovens in the back—or with any of the more unusual regional specials. Actress and cookbook author Madhur Jaffrey supervises the very popular and wide-ranging menu. • 210 E. 58th St. (212-355-7555). (M)

Gabriel's Bar & Restaurant
Just four blocks from Lincoln Center, this acclaimed Northern Italian favorite of theatergoers and neighborhood regulars is unintimidatingly comfortable and culinarily sophisticated at the same time. Hearty dishes include gnocchi in duck ragù, braised short ribs with a semolina custard, and wood-grilled tuna with fresh horseradish. The hot chocolate has a cult following. • 11 W. 60th St. (212-956-4600). (M–E)

★ **Guastavino's**
They could serve tuna casserole and you'd still be in awe of one of the most spectacular restorations of a neglected urban space. Don't worry. It's ok to drop your jaw at the first sight of the towering Alhambran arches. Everybody does. Though you may not be as impressed with what's put in front of you, Guastavino's is one of those massive undertakings that may take a long time to get things right. In the meantime, enjoy the scenery. • 409 E. 59th St. (212-980-2455). (M–E)

★ **March**
If you're not in the mood, March can seem awfully precious. Your meal a succession of intricately thought-out small courses (either four or seven): shards of grilled duck in a tart shower of lime and mango, for instance. Service that almost gets a tissue to you before you've sneezed. But should there come a time when you want to be surrounded by people who have every right to their effusive confidence, Wayne Nish and Joseph Scalice offer one of New York's most deliciously covert seductions. • 405 E. 58th St. (212-754-6272). (E)

★ **Nicole's**
Restaurants in clothing stores are usually more ameni-

Object of Desire

Year of the Pork Chop

If you missed your New Year's good-luck pork dinner, and your 2001 has been a bust thus far, get over to **Komodo**, the cool East Village Asian-Mexican fusion spot, before it's too late. Chef Maggie Moore stuffs a miso-cider-glazed center-cut pork chop with May apples and chorizo and serves it with caramelized onions and crispy fried vegetable dumplings. Moore introduced this succulent special this past New Year's Eve, and since then, Komodo regulars—superstitious or not—have demanded an extended run. (186 Avenue A; 212-529-2658.)

ty than attraction. But this minimalist-chic dining room in the basement of Nicole Farhi's boutique is a rare exception. Chef Annie Wayte is obsessed with seasonal produce, and changes her menu every six weeks to prove it. The less expensive bar menu changes *daily*. Which means one ought not to grow too attached to her grilled-scallop-and-fennel salad, or the fritto misto of striped bass, haricots verts, and artichoke hearts. Then again, there's always the delicious incentive of having something new to discover next time. • 10 E. 60th St. (212-223-2288). (E)

★ The Russian Tea Room
If he hasn't been lionized as a landmark himself, Warner LeRoy certainly deserves a Landmarks Preservation Commission crown for polishing up the fanciful red and green frippery of the Russian Tea Room with so little trauma. Whether you love or hate the trout swimming inside the acrylic bear, you can't fault dishes like borscht and Georgian-spiced seared halibut. • 150 W. 57th St. (212-974-2111). (E)

★ San Domenico
You won't find a more elegant big-deal Italian restaurant in New York. We treasure it for the luxurious space at and between tables, the cool coach-leather chairs, the clockwork service, and the refinement of the risottos, pastas, fish, and game. Owner Tony May has an uncompromising passion for the highest quality Italian ingredients and devotedness to classical technique that rivals any Michelin-starred chef, and it shows. • 240 Central Park So. (212-265-5959). (E)

Above 60th Street, East Side

★ Cafe Boulud
Most chefs have one menu to worry about. At Daniel Boulud's beige-on-beige bistro, Andrew Carmellini has four. For "Le Voyage," he globe-trots wherever his taste buds take him, from Vietnam to New Orleans. Mixing and matching is encouraged, so there's no reason why you can't begin with fresh- and smoked-salmon latkes from "La Saison," segue into potato-crusted sea bass from "La Tradition," and conclude with a warm fig tart from the menu called "Le Potager," nirvana for the vegetarian gourmet. • 20 East 76th Street (212-772-2600). (E)

★ Cello
Every appointment (Bernaudaud dishes, monochromatic flowers, and almost reflective mahogany walls) serves as an elegant yet unobtrusive backdrop for the whisper-light delicacies that emerge from chef Laurent Tourondel's kitchen. Rougets glistening like bloodstones in a raw tomato sauce. Turbot that melts like cotton candy. Lamb as velvety as foie gras. And frozen crème bruleé that must have the Häagen-Dazs people turning like dervishes. Cello also has the most beautiful new private dining room in town. • 53 E. 77th St. (212-517-1200). (E)

★ Daniel
Daniel Boulud is blessed with the gift of being able to add familiar flavors into the most stunning of summations, like walnuts and foie gras that intensify the lush gaminess of quail. He routinely triumphs in why-didn't-anyone-else-think-of-it feats like finding what envelopes sweetbreads to leave you without that heady aftertaste—suspending them between a rhubarb glaze and spinach purée. And his chocolate bombe soars like no other. • 60 E. 65th St. (212-288-0033). (E)

★ Eli's Restaurant
It's downright soothing to wander into Eli's Restaurant, spruced up and downlit for dinner, and relax over Scott Bieber's straightaway cooking. His Nantucket bay scallops in butter come from an era before we ever dreamed of eating seaweed. We're not sure why several slices of Molino tomatoes, even glistening with Laudemio olive oil and fleur de sel, should cost $8 but hey, this is Eli Zabar, the man who taught us no price is too much for the perfect raspberry. • 1411 Third Ave., at 80th St. (212-717-8100). (E)

★ Fred's at Barneys New York
Normally, the stuff served in department-store eateries is the gastronomic equivalent of the final clearance bin. Not so at Fred's. Its menu is an amalgam of au courant Italian (lovely pasta), guilt-ridden dietetic (chicken soup rendered fatless), and size-6-be-damned deli (chicken livers and pot roast to plotz from). Almost as satisfying as snatching up an irregular with no pulled threads. • 10 E. 61st St. (212-833-2200). (M-E)

Mark's
Decked out like a private London club, with plump, tasseled pillows to nestle against. Fine French-American cooking (torchon of foie gras with cranberry-kumquat compote, pan-roasted lobster with Armagnac jus), award-winning wine list, and a Willy Wonka–worthy chocolate tea. • 25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (212-879-1864). (E)

★ Payard Patisserie & Bistro
You'll never shiver and blush the way Francois Payard's Nôtre Dame, Fontainbleau, St.-Honoré, or devilish chocolate tart make you when they hijack your taste buds to a place they've never been and will forever yearn to return. If all this sweetness weren't enough, Payard's chef Philippe Bertineau concocts first and second courses that match François's touted thirds. • 1032 Lexington Ave. (212-717-5252). (M-E)

Sel & Poivre
Stanching the flow downtown for bistro fare. Regulars find what they are looking for in this quaint, countrified space. The country-French cuisine includes steak au poivre, bouillabaisse, and roasted chicken, and the prix fixe menus are a bargain. • 853 Lexington Ave., nr. 64th St. (212-517-5780). (M)

Trata
With its fish-market display, its Greek spreads and salads, and its simply grilled seafood, this bustling Upper East Side restaurant offers an affordable, less dramatic alternative to Estiatorio Milos, where the chef used to work. • 1331 Second Ave., nr. 70th St. (212-535-3800). (M)

Above 60th Street, West Side

★ Jean Georges
Nothing and no one at Jean Georges steals center stage from the wondrous creations of its extraordinary chef, Jean-Georges Vongerichten. If you're okay with such divine supplication, prepare to be open-mouthed whenever you're not chewing. Nothing you encounter will fail to dazzle, from the simplest dish of asparagus and morels au jus to the unexpected combo of sweetbreads en cocotte with ginger and licorice. • 1 Central Park West (212-299-3900). (E)

★ Picholine
Terrance Brennan doesn't want to be the Upper West Side's best chef. He's got the whole city in his sights, which explains why his French-Mediterranean menu aspires to such lofty heights. Rustic nightly specials like cassoulet and seven-hour lamb shank are earthy counterpoint to menu selections like sea-urchin panna cotta and truffle-steeped poached halibut. The wild-mushroom-and-duck risotto has its own fan club, as does fromager Max McCalman, a true cheese whiz. • 35 W. 64th St. (212-724-8585). (E)

River
The *faux*-tropical atmosphere provides a serene, bamboo-bolstered background for the familiar assortment of Vietnamese and Thai dishes. Standouts include chicken satay; pad Thai; spicy coconut chicken soup; and marinated beef with garlic, ginger, and plum sauce. • 345 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 76th St. (212-579-1888). (M)

Queens

Water's Edge
Every table has a view of Manhattan. A quiet and elegant space to partake of fancy American fare like roasted-chestnut soup and red snapper poached in orange-saffron infusion with baby fennel and chervil. Jacket required. • 44th Dr. at the East River (718-482-0033). (E)

Westchester

Equus
No ordinary hotel restaurant, this one is housed within a hundred-year-old castle called, appropriately enough, the Castle at Tarrytown, a Relais & Châteaux property with Hudson River views. Dinner is a $58 prix fixe, and offers such contemporary French fare as terrine of foie gras with Calvados, pan-roasted wild striped bass with corn ravioli, and medallions of venison with red cabbage and root- vegetable cakes. Jacket required. • 400 Benedict Ave. (914-631-1980). (E)

Photograph by Carina Salvi.

cue

InConcert

Edited by Tara Pepper

Ground Rules

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and public outdoor performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Classical Music

San Francisco Symphony Orchestra
Michael Tilson Thomas leads one program of works by Stravinsky, including *Les Noces* and *Symphony of Psalms*, and a second concert of music by Mahler. 2/21 and 2/22 at 8. • Carnegie Hall, Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (212-247-7800); $20–$78.

Lincoln Piano Trio
Performs trios by Mozart, Beethoven, and Dvorák. 2/22 at 8. • Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $19.

The Mannes Orchestra
Wagner's *Prelude to Die Meistersinger* and Mozart's Clarinet Concerto in A Major are conducted by Samuel Wong. 2/22 at 8. • Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); free tickets must be reserved by calling the box office.

Artis Quartet
Interprets Viennese classics with new and unusual works: Haydn, Berg, Webern, and Zemlinsky are on the program. 2/23 at 8. • Weill Recital Hall, 154 W. 57th St. (212-247-7800); $36.

The Chamber Music Society
Mezzo-soprano Susanne Mentzer will perform the original chamber version of Mahler's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, followed by Strauss's Piano Quartet in C Minor, performed by members of the society. 2/23 at 8 and 2/25 at 5. • Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $27.50–$37.50.

The New York Philharmonic
Kurt Masur conducts the U.S. premiere of Hans Werner Henze's Symphony No. 9 in a concert that also includes Beethoven's Fantasia for Piano, Chorus, and Orchestra. 2/23–2/24 at 8, 2/27 at 7:30. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $19–$80.

John Musto
The premieres of *Clarinet Sextet* and *The Book of Uncommon Prayer* kick off this concert in the "Composer Portrait" series and highlight Musto's particular interest in setting poetry. 2/24 at 8. • Columbia University's Miller Theatre, 116th St. and Broadway (212-854-7799); $17.

Itzhak Perlman, violin
Is joined by pianist Rohan DeSilva in a tribute concert to Jascha Heifetz. 2/25 at 3. • Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $60.

Michael Schade, tenor
Makes his New York debut in the "Art of the Song" series with music by Beethoven, Schubert, Liszt, Fauré, and Strauss. 2/25 at 2. • Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (212-721-6500); $35.

Opera

The Metropolitan Opera
L'Italiana in Algeri closes 3/1; Massenet's *Manon* has its last performance 3/3. *Cosi Fan Tutte* and *La Traviata* are also running this week. Call for program details and times, or visit www.metopera.org. • The Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center (212-362-6000); $25–$250.

Amato Opera
Stages a new production of Gounod's *Faust*, in fifteenth-century Nancy, with sets inspired by woodcuts of *The Dance of Death* by Holbein and earlier artists. 2/24–3/25, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30, Sundays at 2:30. • Amato Opera Theater, 319 Bowery (212-228-8200); $50 opening-night gala, including buffet and champagne; $20–$25 other performances.

Dance

New York City Ballet
Performances are Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, Saturdays at 2 and 8, Sundays at 3. Call for details or log on to www.nycballet.com. • New York State Theater, Lincoln Center (212-307-4100); $26–$74.

"Stars of the 21st Century"
Stars of the Bolshoi, ABT, the Royal Ballet, the San Francisco Ballet, and many others come together for a program of classics and modern works. 2/19 at 7:30. • New York State Theater at Lincoln Center (212-870-5570); $20–$115.

Twyla Tharp Dance
Twyla Tharp Dance celebrates its New York City debut with two local premieres: *Mozart Clarinet Quintet K.581* and *Surfer at the River Styx*, a dramatic sextet set to an original score by Donald Knaack. 2/20–2/25 at 8, Sat. and Sun. also at 2. • Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave. (212-242-0800); $38.

"Broadway Celebrates Harlem"
Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Dance Theater of Harlem, Savion Glover, and Jubilant Sykes are among those participating in an evening of music and dance to raise funds and draw attention to the continuing tragedy of AIDS. 2/26 at 7:30. • Apollo Theater, 253 W. 125th St. (212-840-0770); $35–$75, performance only; $250–$1,000, performance, reception, and cast party at the Magic Johnson theater.

The Paul Taylor Dance Company
Premieres two new works in its City Center Season, *Fiends Angelical* and *Dandelion Wine*. 2/27–3/11, times vary. • City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (212-581-1212); $25–$55.

Preview

Gut Reaction

Part of Martha Graham's legend is built around the stories and elaborate reflections on death and mythology she shared with her company before they got down to work. **Paul Taylor** is as sparing with words as his mentor was gregarious, however, and the phone conversation we have from his house on the North Fork is studded with silences. But though he may not talk much, he's a great listener: Taylor spent a great deal of time settling on the unusual music to which his two new works are choreographed. The opening night of his company's City Center engagement next Tuesday features the New York premiere of *Fiends Angelical*, which was first performed in July at Jacob's Pillow, the summer dance mecca in the Berkshires, and is choreographed to George Crumb's string quartet *Black Angels.* When he first heard the piece, he recalls, "I couldn't believe it was just strings. They run their bows along wineglasses; there's a little vocalizing by the players. The piece is a ritual of transformation. It's spooky." The second new dance, *Dandelion Wine*, is a sunny welcome to spring set to music by Baroque composer Pietro Locatelli. "I avoided his work for a while," Taylor admits. "The cadenzas scared me—they're very elaborate." Also on the program: a revival of *Musical Offering* (pictured) set to Bach's music of the same name for keyboard. "The music wasn't written as a requiem. I'm not sure if other people hear it that way, but I do." Now 70, Taylor no longer tours with his company, but in addition to staging the City Center performances, he's finishing up *Black Tuesday*, a work for ABT premiering in April. "Each piece is a new adventure," he says. "I like to start over each time." (See "Dance.") T.P.

Photograph by Lois Greenfield.

Nightlife

Edited by Ethan Brown

Concerts

An Evening of Doo-Wop Classics
2/24 at 8: Starring The Dubs; The Del Vikings; Johnny Maestro & The Brooklyn Bridge; The Legendary Teenagers; The Orioles; Shirley Alston Reeves; Charlie Thomas. • New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark, N.J. (212-307-7171); $25–$50.

Don Henley
2/25 at 8: With Jill Sobule. • NJPAC, Newark, N.J. (212-307-7171); $46–$89.

"Masters of Persian Music"
With Mohammad Reza Shajarian, Hossein Alizadeh, Kayhan Kalhor, Homayoun Shajarian. 2/24 at 8. • Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (212-307-7171); $45.

Paolo Conte
2/26 at 8. • Beacon Theater, 72nd St. and Broadway (212-302-7171); $25.

Vertical Horizon
2/23 at 8: With Sister Hazel; Pat McGee Band • Hammerstein Ballroom, 311 W. 34th St. (212-307-7171); $25.

Small Stages

Arlene Grocery
2/20: Bunsen Honeydew; On. 2/21: Amanda's Waiting; Annie Minogue. 2/22: Sean Altman; Kaz Silver. 2/23: Perforated Head; Bluish 66. 2/24: Special Guest; The Other 99. 2/25: "Classic Album Night": Martins Folly, "After the Goldrush"; George Gilmore, "The Brown Album"; Mary Lee Cortes, "Blood on the Tracks." 2/26: Clumsy; Happy Fernandez. 2/27: Seeking Enso; March. • 95 Stanton St. (212-358-1633).

B.B. King Blues Club & Grill
2/21: Hiram Bullock. 2/2: Roomful of Blues. 2/24: Billy Preston and Sam Moore. • 243 W. 42nd St. (212-997-4144).

Bottom Line
2/21: The Australian Pink Floyd Show. 2/22: "Nightbirds: A Celebration of Women Performers": Mary Gauthier; Ruth Gerson; Tabitha Fair; Kudu. 2/23–2/24: Jimmy Webb. • 15 W. 4th St. (212-228-6300).

Bowery Ballroom
2/23: The Levellers; Organic Grooves. 2/24: The White Stripes. 2/27: Doves. • 6 Delancey St. (212-533-2111).

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.
2/23: Lil' Brian Terry. 2/24: Holmes Brothers. • 73 Eighth Ave. (212-924-9755); $.

Fez
Thursdays: Mingus Big Band. 2/23: The Linemen; White Knuckle Sandwich; Dan Finnerty and the Dan Band. 2/24: Richard Julian; Norah Jonesss; VaVaVoom Room. 2/25: Ari Gold & Friends; The Velvet Mafia with Dean Johnson. 2/27: Laura Cantrell; The George Usher Group; Julia Greenberg. 2/28: Accordion Night Redux. • Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (212-533-2680).

Irving Plaza
2/27: Lords of Acid. • 17 Irving Pl. (212-777-6800).

Joe's Pub
An intimate space that boasts the most eclectic booking in town. Expect everything from torch singers to underground hip-hoppers to New Age composers. Mondays: "Stylus," underground hip-hop with D.J.'s like Bobbito and Lord Sear. Tuesdays: "Original Roses" with D.J. Beverly Bond. Wednesdays: Reggae music with "Fever." Thursdays: Editors, scene-makers, and boldface names take their turns spinning their favorite records with the "Personality D.J. Series." Sundays: The deep-house-oriented "Love Bazaar" with D.J. MKL. 2/19: Idina Menzel. 2/20: Antony and The Johnsons. 2/21: Sista Factory Presents Peter Lord. 2/25: Howard Fishman Quartet CD release. 2/26: Idina Menzel. • 425 Lafayette St. (212-239-6200).

Knitting Factory
2/20: Morgan Taylor's Rock Group; Tony Scherr Group; Pamela Miller. 2/21: The Gossip. 2/22: Lake Trout. 2/23: Town and Country. 2/24: Death Cab for Cutie; Jealous Sound; And/Ors. 2/25: Uri Caine. 2/26: Spirals With Tony Malaby. 2/27–2/28: Rahat Ali Khan. • 74 Leonard St. (212-219-3055); $.

Manitoba's
Mondays: Beat Rodeo. Fridays: Adam Roth. 2/20: Booty Olympics. 2/21: The Retroliners; Purple Knife. 2/22: The Fire Gods. 2/23: The Dark Horses; Tom Clark. 2/24: Brother Superior. 2/25: The Bomb Pops. 2/27: Bad New Fifty; The Monumentals. • 99 Ave. B (212-982-2511).

Maxwell's
2/21: D.J. Prince Paul; M.C. Paul Barman. 2/22: Death Cab for Cutie; The Jealous Sound; The And/Ors. 2/23: The Gossip; Skyrocket; Palomar. 2/24: Bobfields; The Negatones; Tim Kinsella. • 1039 Washington St., Hoboken, N.J. (201-653-1703).

Mercury Lounge
2/20: Umbrella; Rubyhorse. 2/21: The Ferns; The Boodavelvets. 2/22: Johnny Society; Church of Betty. 2/25: Death & Dying; Moldy Peaches. • 217 E. Houston St. (212-260-4700).

Rodeo Bar
2/20: The Rooftop Cowboys. 2/21–2/22: Randy Weeks. 2/23: The Twistin' Tarantulas. 2/24: The Kings of Nothing. 2/25: Leanne Westover and Strange Cargo. 2/26: Western Carvan. 2/27: The Yallopin' Hounds. • 375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (212-683-6500).

S.O.B.'s
2/20: Men of Vizion. 2/21: Ky-Mani Marley. 2/23: Alex Bugnon. 2/26: Sierra Maestra. 2/27: Congoes. • 204 Varick St. (212-243-4940).

The Village Underground
Former Tramps booker Steve Weitzman brings his eclectic sensibility to a new smoke-free club in the West Village. 2/22: Lisa Loeb. 2/23: Milo Z. 2/24: CJ Chenier. 2/27: Superdrag. • 130 W. 3rd St. (212-777-7745).

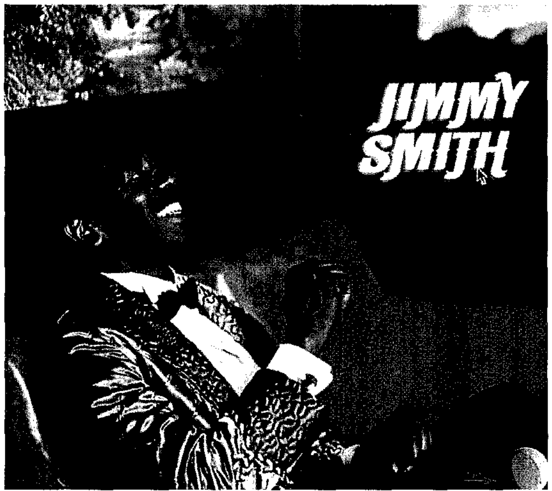
Wetlands
Mondays: D.J. Logic. Tuesdays: Illuminati. Thursdays: Groove Collective. 2/20: Phish vs. Dead; The Deadbeats. 2/21: Yonder Mountain String Band; Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey. 2/23: Matt Witte's New Blood Revival; Mindface; Taino. 2/24: Shady Groove; Brothers Past. 2/27: Bathtub Gin; The Deadbeats. • 161 Hudson St. (212-386-3600); $.

Clubs

Centro-Fly
Once dominated by the bottle-service set, Centro-Fly has now achieved a near-perfect mix of Wall Streeters with loosened ties, D.J.-bag-carrying dance-music fanatics, and track-suited deep-house heads. Tuesdays: Promoter Noah Tepperberg's fabulous "TuesdayBabyTuesday" goes head-to-head with Spa's model-centric Tuesday party. Thursdays: "Subliminal Sessions" with D.J. Erick Morillo and big-name special guests. The second Friday of every month: House party "N'Ice." Third Friday of every month: House party "Con-fu-sion" with talented out-of-town D.J.'s like Chicago's Pierre. Saturdays: Energetic house and big beat with "Plant." • 45 W. 21st St. (212-803-7859).

Cheetah
A jungle-themed club with a spacious dance floor and a small yet powerful sound system. Thursdays: A super-exclusive (invite only, they say), hyper-stealthy party thrown by the powerhouse trio of Marvet Britto, Allen West, and Samuel "Tone" Barnes. D.J. Kaori spins. Saturdays: Thumping tribal house and live percussionists at "Cherchez La Femme." Sundays: "Boys Nite" D.J. Merritt spins at "Mardi Gras." • 12 W. 21st St. (212-206-7770).

Performance



Mr. Smith Goes to Washington Square

He may not have received the Marsalis seal of approval in Ken Burns's *Jazz,* but the blues-and-funk-inflected Hammond B3 organ-playing of **Jimmy Smith** (pictured) is worshiped by fans ranging from the Beastie Boys—who even sampled Smith's song "Root Down (And Get It)"—to E Street Band guitarist Nils Lofgren, who calls Smith the "most soulful and innovative player" in history. Such across-the-board praise isn't surprising, given that the ebullient tones of Smith's keyboard can seem soulful, funky, and jazzy all at once. The title of Smith's new album, *Dot Com Blues,* might imply a dirgy musical eulogy for the bear market of 2001, but it's actually full of celebratory, New Orleans–style jams with the likes of B. B. King, Keb' Mo', and Dr. John. Celebrate the astounding career of an artist at the heart of jazz innovation when Smith plays the Blue Note February 20 through 25. (See "Small Stages.")

Ground Rules

In clubland, promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Frank's Lounge

A bare-bones bar and dance spot, which hosts Lorie and E-Man's frenzied but low-key house-music party "Bang the Party" every Friday. The party, which has been at venues all over town from the 205 Club to Baktun, is just now settling into its own groove. • 660 Fulton St., at S. Elliott St., Brooklyn (212-726-1322).

Fun

This sprawling, bi-level, warehouselike space doesn't book big-name D.J. talent, but it's got one of the coolest interiors in clubland, with huge projections of Japanese *anime,* a vertiginous yet comfy balcony area, and a seemingly gravity-defying D.J. booth. Best of all, Fun recently snagged the cyberfetish party "Click +Drag" from the now-defunct Mother. • 130 Madison St., under the Manhattan Bridge (212-964-0303); $5.

Limelight

The Limelight is back from the dead thanks to its powerhouse weekend nights which see the likes of Detroit techno icon Jeff Mills and the trance heavies of the "Gatecrasher" crew grace the turntables. The mazelike club's renaissance comes just in time, as other megaclubs like Twilo have become uncomfortably packed, verging on the claustrophobic. • 660 Sixth Ave., at 20th St. (212-807-7780).

The Roxy

Fridays, the Roxy enlists D.J. Jason Ojeda for the relaunch of its night for the weekender straight crowd. Saturdays: Superstar D.J. Victor Calderone spins house for the Chelsea boys while hard-bodied go-go boys dance on the bar. • 515 W. 18th St. (212-627-0404); $.

Shine

This downtown spot is now host to excellent, enthusiastically received D.J.-oriented nights as well as up-and-coming rock and dance acts. Thursdays: the gloriously great D.J. Ron Trent and special guests like Phil Asher and Norman Jay. Fridays: The hip-hop- and house-oriented "Fri-Daze." Saturdays: D.J. Greg Poole's dance-centric "Tremendous." • 285 W. Broadway (212-941-0900).

Spa

The health-and-wellness theme (white walls, bathrooms designed to look like saunas) is thankfully mostly unobtrusive, and the crowd is thankfully not excessively chic. Spa promoter Steven Lewis maintains the kind of balance between office *zhlubs,* club kids, and A-listers he pulled off so nicely in the early days of the now-defunct Life. Wednesdays: "Big Bad Dodgy Disco," with New Wave and rock spun by D.J. Paul Sevigny. Thursdays: Superpromoter Erich Conrad's "Glam," with D.J. Jackie Christie. Fridays: Marc Ronson and Grandmaster Flash spin hip-hop and R&B for the A-listers at "Hollywood 2000." • 76 E. 13th St. (212-388-1060).

The Warehouse

Manhattan-centric clubbers have been eating their bridge-and-tunnel-dissing crow thanks to this house-music paradise located in, of all places, the Bronx. Saturdays are the night to head up to the Warehouse and check out D.J.'s like T-Pro and Andre Collins. Could this be the beginning of an outer-borough clubland renaissance? • 141 W. 140th St., bet. Grand Concourse and Walton Aves. (718-992-5974).

Twilo

Never mind all the drug-bust drama: The real news here is that Twilo is leaving trance in the dust and fast becoming a progressive-house fan's wet dream, thanks to sets from UK epic housers like Mauro Piccotto and Danny Howells. Wednesdays: The upstairs lounge hosts hard house and techno with "2K Wednesdays," a low-key alternative to the frenzied Friday nights. Fridays: World-class D.J.'s like Carl Cox, Sasha and Digweed, and Cassius play for a mixed crowd of drag divas and on-the-prowl straights. Saturdays: Aging club king D.J. Junior Vasquez spins for his bare-chested Chelsea-boy following. • 530 W. 27th St. (212-268-1600).

Upstairs at Studio 54

Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 10 P.M. to 4 A.M., Veruka's Noel Ashman and the ubiquitous Ronsons (Charlotte and Samantha, to be exact) take over the loungey upstairs space of Studio 54. Expect nods to the disco era, but the overall vibe will be upscale hip-hop and house. • W. 54th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (212-517-4065); $20.

Vinyl

The recent quality-of-life crackdowns have taken a toll on the club's once extraordinarily open vibe, but the parties—"Shelter" and "Body & Soul" in particular—continue to be strong. Fridays: Hard, trippy house from D.J. Danny Tenaglia. Saturdays: Timmy Regisford's fantastic house-music party "Shelter," which at about seven in the morning becomes the city's most adventurous party as Regisford bangs out everything from the Afro-beat of Fela Kuti to the ambient, pillow-soft house of Mr. Fingers. Sundays: François K, Joe Claussell, and Danny Krivit spin at the now-legendary afternoon party "Body & Soul." Arrive early (before seven) or you'll face a devastatingly long line at the door. • 6 Hubert St. (212-343-1379).

Jazz

"Jazz at Lincoln Center" presents Freddy Cole and Mary Stallings

2/22–2/24 at 8, 2/25 at 6. • Stanley H. Kaplan Penthouse, Rose Building, 165 W. 65th St. (212-721-6500); $45.

"Jazz at Noon"

Lunchtime jam sessions every Friday at the San Martin Restaurant with some of jazz's hottest players. 2/23: Cecilia Tenconi. • 143 E. 49th St. (212-832-0888) or www.jazzatnoon.com.

"Jazz Insights Presents: The Music of Duke Ellington"

Informal lectures hosted by Arnold Jay Smith. All lectures begin at 7:45 P.M. 2/20: George Avakian. 2/27: Joe Wilder. • 66 W. 12th St. (212-229-5690); $35.

Birdland

Proof that jazz is alive and well in midtown, this classy boîte serves up some fine southern cuisine along with its first-rate lineup. Sundays: Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Big Band. Mondays: The Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Tuesdays: from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M., David Ostwald's Louis Armstrong Centennial Band. Tuesdays: The Famous Duke Ellington Orchestra. 2/21: Cab Calloway Orchestra. 2/22–2/24: Kenny Rankin. • 315 W. 44th St. (212-581-3080).

Blue Note

With a great sound system and a decent view from every seat in the house, the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30. 2/20–2/25: Jimmy Smith. • 131 W. 3rd St. (212-475-8592).

Cajun

A brassy and brightly lit bit of New Orleans in Chelsea, dedicated to Preservation Hall–style Dixieland. Regulars include Joe Muranyi, clarinetist for the last six years of Louis Armstrong's All Stars; Eddy Davis, a jazz banjoist; and Chuck Folds, a stride pianist and sometime accompanist to trumpet legend Doc Cheatham. • 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (212-691-6174).

City Hall

Fridays in the Granite Room: The Charles Mingus Orchestra. $15 cover, $10 for students. • 131 Duane St. (212-227-7777).

Deanna's

This Lower East Side jazz haunt run by singer Deanna Kirk should give Tonic a run for its money. Open Tuesday through Sunday. Kirk performs on most nights. • 107 Rivington St. (212-420-2258).

Detour

With no cover and top-notch young players, this Village joint packs 'em in every night of the week. Sundays: Mike Magilligan. • 349 E. 13th St. (212-533-6212).

Iridium

In the surreal basement across from Lincoln Center, you'll find formidable jazz comers and the occasional legend. Thoughtful table placement minimizes a couple of structural columns' potentially disastrous effects on sight lines. Monday nights, the Les Paul Quartet holds office hours. Sets Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 and 10:30, with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. 2/20–2/25: Benny Green Trio. • 44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (212-582-2121).

The Jazz Standard

A sprawling room with terrific sound and the best club menu in the city, the Jazz Standard offers a fresh mix of estimable hard-boppers, jazz greats, and artists on the rise. Mon., Tues., and Fri. at 5:30 and Sat. at 7, guitarist David O'Rourke swings in the upstairs 27 Standard bar. Sets Wed.–Thurs. at 8 and 10; Fri. and Sat. at 8, 10:30, and midnight; and Sun. at 7 and 9. $15–$25 cover; $10

Debut

Isn't It Iranic?

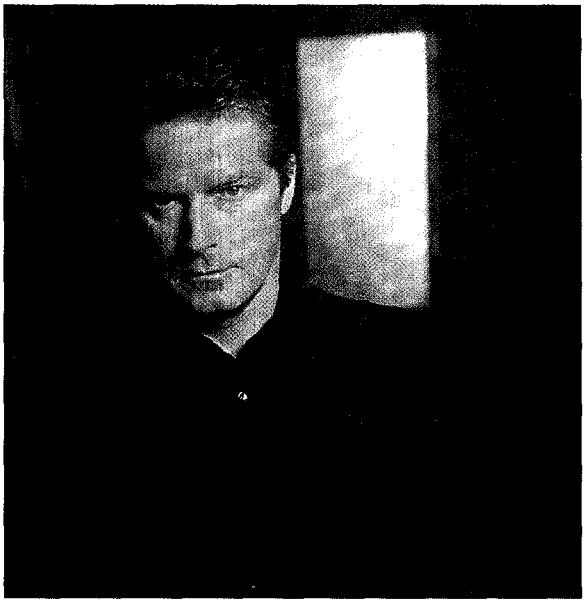
Tabla-centric Indian music had a nice run as the flavor of the month among classical and electronic musicians (call it *Revolver* retro), and it looks like the sweet, string-based sounds of Persian music will be the next big thing appreciated—and appropriated—by hip Western ears. A national tour of the **Masters of Persian Music** (pictured, from left, lute player Hossein Alizadeh, vocalist Mohammad Reza Shajarian, fiddler Kayhan Kalhor, and percussionist Homayoun Shajarian) comes to Town Hall on February 24. Next month, Kalhor will join the New York Philharmonic and Yo-Yo Ma for several dates at Avery Fisher Hall. (See "Concerts.")

Photograph courtesy of the World Music Institute.

Performance

Teflon Don

Former Eagle **Don Henley** (pictured) might not be the model of millennial hip, but the cranky world-weariness of his recent *Inside Job* makes him far more bearable than victory-lappers like Mick Jagger and Paul McCartney. Henley even has a fan in cheeky novelist Emma Forrest, whose main character in her book *Namedropper* laments that she couldn't date a man who didn't love his eighties hit "The Boys of Summer." Henley plays the New Jersey Performing Arts Center February 25. (See "Concerts.")



minimum. 2/20–2/25: The Steve Lacy Trio. • 116 E. 27th St. (212-576-2232).

Museum of Modern Art
Jazz performances at MOMA's "Sette MOMA" restaurant Thursday and Saturday evenings, 6 to 10. 2/20: Frank Amsallem Trio. 2/22 and 2/24: Tom Aalfs Trio. • 11 W. 53rd St. (212-708-0480).

Red Blazer
Mondays and Tuesdays: Sam Ulano's Jazz Band. Wednesdays: Felix Swing Band; Alan Russell Big Jazz Band. Thursdays: Stan Rubin's Big Swing Band. Fridays: Simon Wettenhall's Oceanic Dixieland Band. Saturdays: Bob Cantwell's Dixie & Swing Band. • 32 W. 37th St. (212-947-6428).

Rose Center
2/23: George Coleman Trio. The Rose Center is open until 8:45 P.M. Fridays; suggested admission price is $10 for adults, $7.50 for students and seniors, $6 for children. • Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., American Museum of Natural History (212-769-5100).

Showman's Café
Reopened right on 125th Street (though not, unfortunately, in its original location adjacent to the Apollo), the legendary jazz watering hole offers slow-cooked soul-jazz and funkified hard bop every night. No cover; two-drink minimum. • 375 E. 125th St. (212-864-8941); $.

Small's
Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. • 183 W. 10th St (212-929-7565).

Sweet Basil
An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. 2/20–2/25: Jerry Gonzalez and Fort Apache. Sets at 9 and 11, with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. • 88 Seventh Ave. So. (212-242-1785).

Tonic
Yet another impeccably hip Lower East Side avant-jazzerie, Tonic has its sights set on the Knitting Factory crowd. Sunday: Klezmer Sundays. 2/20: Maya Homburger; Barry Guy. 2/22: DJ Logic; Duma Love. 2/28: Club d'Elf. • 107 Norfolk St. (212-358-7503); $.

Village Vanguard
Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club, and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world. Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30, with a late 1 A.M. set Fri. and Sat. 2/20–2/25: Branford Marsalis Quartet. • 178 Seventh Ave. So. (212-255-4037); $

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club
Animal House ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Shows Tues.–Thurs. at 9:30; Fri.–Sat. at 8, 10, and midnight. • 82 W. 3rd St. (212-477-1000).

Carolines On Broadway
In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. Mondays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. $12.50–$24.50, two-drink minimum. 2/20: Sam Greenfield. 2/21: Star ad Bucwild's 3D Amateur Side Show. 2/22–2/25: Sheryl Underwood. 2/27: Hot 97's "Phat Tuesday." • 1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (212-757-4100).

Comedy Cellar
A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11; Sat. at 9, 10:45, and 12:30 A.M.; and Sun.–Thurs. at 9. 2/20–2/27: Colin Quinn; Greg Giraldo; Mitch Fatel; Rick Crom; Dave Attell; Godfrey. • 117 MacDougal St. (212-254-3480).

Comic Strip
Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. • 1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (212-861-9386).

Dangerfield's
Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11:15; Sat. at 8, 10:30, and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat. ($20 for 10:30 Sat. show), $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. • 1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (212-593-1650).

Gotham
A trendy comedy spot in the Flatiron district. Every Tues. and Sun.: New Talent Showcase; Wednesdays with Robert Klein. Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 with a $10 cover; Fri. and Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 with a $15 cover. Two-drink minimum. 2/21: Robert Klein. 2/22: "Comedy Salsa." 2/23–2/24: Mitch Fatel; Vic Henley; Jim David; Greg Giraldo. • 34 W. 22nd St. (212-367-9000).

"Spin Cycle Comedy"
Comedy from Danny Cohen and Jodie Wasserman while you separate your whites and colors. Really. • King Size Laundromat, 178 Seventh Ave., at 20th St. (212-501-6016); free.

Stand-up New York
Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Shows Sun.–Thurs. at 7 and 9; Fri.–Sat. at 8, 10, and 12:15 A.M. $12 cover. • 236 W. 78th St. (212-595-0850).

Cabaret

Algonquin Hotel
The Oak Room hosts some formidable names in its cozy environs. (Early shows Tues.–Sat., late shows Fri. and Sat.) • 59 W. 44th St. (212-840-6800).

Arci's Place
A Murray Hill–area Italian restaurant with an intimate cabaret space. 2/20–2/24: Carol Woods. 2/25: Steven Lutvak. 2/26: Deborah Bean. • 450 Park Ave. So., at 30th St. (212-532-4370).

Cafe Carlyle
Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band at 8:45. $60. Extended through 3/17: Mary Cleere Haran in "Sweet & Low Down." • Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (212-744-1600).

Cafe Pierre
Tues.–Sat., singer-pianist Kathleen Landis celebrates her fourteenth year at the Cafe Pierre with a special program called "Fascinating Rhythms: 50 Years of American Popular Song and Jazz." Sun.–Mon., Nancy Winston sings and plays piano. $19 minimum; jacket and tie required. • Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (212-940-8195).

The Carnegie Club at Carnegie Bar and Books
Fridays and Saturdays at 9:30 and 11:00: Sinatra impersonator Cary Hoffman, backed by Stan Rubin's eleven-piece big band. $20 cover; two-drink minimum. • 156 W. 56th St. (212-957-9676).

Don't Tell Mama
What better way to wind down after an evening of overwrought Broadway fare than some understated cabaret? Thursdays: "Seth's Broadway Chatterbox." Fridays: "The Next Big Broadway Musical." Saturdays at 8: "Poole Party!" Saturdays at 11: Tommy Femia presents "Judy Garland Live!" • 343 W. 46th St. (212-757-0788); $.

Feinstein's At the Regency
Michael Feinstein's cabaret space at the Regency Hotel shares the room with the restaurant 540 Park. Tickets are $50 Tues.–Fri.; $75 for the early show on Friday; and all shows on Saturday; $50 food-and-drink minimum. 2/20–3/3: Nell Carter. • 540 Park Ave., at 61st St. (212-307-4100 or 212-339-4095).

FireBird Café
The theater district's newest post-show snuggery, right next door to an overwrought Russian restaurant—steer clear of the Cossack-dagger-toting doormen and you'll be fine. Sets Wed.–Thurs. at 9; Fri.–Sat. at 9 and 11. $30 cover; $15 minimum. • 365 W. 46th St. (212-586-0244).

Judy's
This cozy and friendly piano bar features two performance spaces, a fine menu, and a weekly gig by Judy herself. 2/21: Nedy Silver. 2/22: Ron Ramsay. 2/23: Aaron Lee Battle; George Pellegrino. 2/24: Denise DiRenzo; George Pellegrino. 2/25: Joan Anne Maxham; David Sabella. • 169 Eighth Ave., bet. 18th and 19th Sts. (212-929-5410).

Photograph by Dennis Keeley.

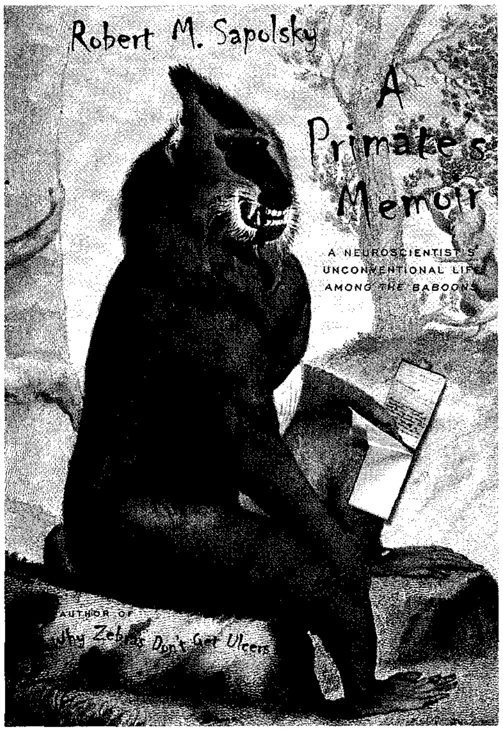
TheMix

Edited by Boris Kachka

In Print

Monkey Business

Robert Sapolsky—*a neurobiologist whom Oliver Sacks calls "one of the best scientist-writers of our time"*—made his first career move in the middle of the night, at the age of 13½: He became an atheist. "It was sort of this mixture of neurobiology and existentialist crisis," Sapolsky says. His parents, Orthodox Jews in Bensonhurst, were none too pleased, and they were even less enchanted when Sapolsky became a vegetarian, refused to shave (at 43, he still hasn't), and began learning Swahili in preparation for a life studying primates in Kenya. Upon graduating from Harvard, he set off for Nairobi to investigate the effects of stress on the health of baboons. That's the starting point of *A Primate's Memoir* (Scribner, $25), Sapolsky's chronicle of life in eighties Africa. Its full complement of monkey-darting and cutesy anthropomorphism is cleverly interspersed with vignettes about vanishing tribes, teetering governments, near-kidnappings, and, of course, ecological disaster *(though Sapolsky shies away from Goodall-style pronouncements, confessing that "ba*boons as a whole are not badly in need of a cause célèbre"). It may be the third of his books for laymen (after *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers* and *The Trouble With Testosterone*, as well as hundreds of articles for publications from *Discover* to *The New Yorker*), but Sapolsky began writing it ten years ago, in the bush. "I was not a future writer back then," Sapolsky says. "But there's no radio and no television and no anything, and the nearest electric outlet's 90 miles away, you get mail every two weeks, and suddenly you are highly motivated to start *writing to zillions of people in the hopes* that someone'll write back. So that becomes a major conduit for observations and emotions—and you sort of come out the other end being a writer." B.K.


Robert M. Sapolsky
A Primate's Memoir
A Neuroscientist's Unconventional Life Among the Baboons
Author of Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers

Radio Highlights

"New York & Company"
Host Leonard Lopate interviews some notable authors, including A. S. Byatt, who discusses her latest novel, *The Biographer's Tale;* Ann Crittenden, who talks about *The Price of Motherhood;* and James Sallis, mystery writer and biographer of Chester Himes. • 2/20, noon to 2 P.M. WNYC, 820 AM.

Studio 360
Kurt Andersen, joined by Sarah Jessica Parker and *New Yorker* writer Stephen Schiff, explores arts awards, looking behind the scenes at an opera contest and a juried competition, asking winners about the consequences of receiving awards, and presenting a collage of acceptance speeches past. • 2/24 at 10 A.M. WNYC, 93.9 FM.

Lectures and Panels

"Thirty Years of the Rembrandt Research Project"
Ernst van de Wetering, the chairman of this mission to compile the full catalogue of Rembrandt's work, discusses the tension between hard science and connoisseurship in authenticating art. • 2/20, 6 to 8:30 P.M. The Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. (reservations required at 212-391-6234); $25.

Shigeru Ban
The Tokyo-based architect discusses his work and humanitarian activities worldwide. Ban makes buildings out of paper tubes, often to help the victims of natural disasters like the 1995 Kobe earthquake. • 2/20 at 6:30 P.M. Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (212-832-1155); $10.

Felix Rohatyn
The former U.S. ambassador to France delivers his first American speech since returning, about Franco-American relations regarding security and economic issues. A Q&A follows. • 2/21 at 7:30 P.M. Hemmerdinger Hall, NYU Main Building, first floor, 100 Washington Sq. E. (212-998-8740); free.

"The Modern City: Heroes and Villains"
This slide lecture by historian Matthew Postal, the final lecture in the Municipal Art Society's six-part series "From Dutch to Disney: The Architectural History of New York City," focuses on shapers of the contemporary cityscape, both good and evil. • 2/21 at 6:30 P.M. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave., at 51st St. (Reser*vations required at 212-935-3960); $18.*

George Soros
Charlie Rose interviews the wealthy global humanitarian about his worldwide projects and the future of global capitalism. • 2/21 at 8 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $20.

Altered States of Consciousness
A three-day conference at the New School covers all the bases on the issue of controlled substances. On Thursday, two panels focus on the specific psychoactive effects of drugs and their therapeutic uses (and doctor-director Jonathan Miller gives the keynote speech). On Friday, the morning focuses on drugs, inspiration, and religious ritual, with a turn toward legal and economic issues in the afternoon. A final morning panel on Saturday explores alternatives to the war on drugs. • 2/22–2/24. Tishman Auditorium, New School University, 65 W. 12th St. (212-229-2488 for registration and schedule); $100, $18 per session.

Michael Dertouzos
The former head of the MIT computer-science lab discusses his book, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Computers Human-Centric.* • 2/22 at 8:15 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $20.

"Models of Resistance"
Subtitled "Conversations Between Activists Across Generations," this all-day conference pairs representatives of two generations of female activists for disability rights, global justice, and racial and gender equality. A plenary session in the morning is followed by lunchtime discussions with the activists, a plenary meeting, and a reception. • 2/24, 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Barnard Hall, Barnard College, Broadway at 117th St. (212-854-2067 for *reservations, $5 more at door*); $40, students free.

Early Collections of African Art
BMA curator William Siegmann leads a slide lecture and panel discussion about early collections of African Art in the U.S. With scholar Helen Shannon and Christa Clarke, curator of African art at the Neuberger Museum of Art. • 2/24 at 4 P.M. Cantor Auditorium, Brooklyn Museum of Art, 200 Eastern Parkway (718-638-5000, ext. 330); free with $4 admission.

"Gilded Age New York, 1865–1890"
Architectural historian Thomas Mellins, coauthor of award-winning books on the city, gives an illustrated lecture. A reception follows. • 2/26 at 6:30 P.M. The Beaux Arts Alliance, 115 E. 74th St. (Required reservations at 212-639-9120); $25.

The Written Word

Susan Stewart
The poet reads from her work as part of the New School's Poetry Forum, moderated by David Lehman. • 2/20 at 6:30 P.M. The New School, Room 510, 66 W. 12th St. (212-229-5611); free.

Ernesto Quiñonez
Continuing the Museum of the City of New York's Gotham Readers series of New York–related readings (this season's title: "Gangs, Gangsters & Gangstas"), Quiñonez reads from his critically acclaimed first novel, *Bodega Dreams.* • 2/21 at 6 P.M. The Julia de Burgos Latina Cultural Center, 1680 Lexington Ave., at 105th St. (*recommended reservations at 212-534-1672, ext. 207*); $15.

Nina Bernstein
The New York *Times* reporter talks about her new book, *The Lost Children of Wilder,* on the failures of New York's foster-care system, at a book party that's open to the public. • 2/21 at 6:30 P.M. The World Room, Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, 2950 Broadway, at 116th St. (212-854-4150); free.

Esther Friesner and Gahan Wilson
Friesner, a two-time winner of the Nebula Award, and Wilson, a writer and renowned cartoonist, read at KGB's series on contemporary science fiction. • 2/21 at 7 P.M. KGB Bar, 85 E. 4th St. (212-505-3360); free.

Nuala O'Faolain
The best-selling memoirist reads from her highly anticipated first novel, *My Dream of You.* • 2/22 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 675 Sixth Ave., at 21st St. (212-727-1227); free.

Emmanuel Carrère and Alan Furst
Carrère reads from *The Adversary,* his best-selling, critically acclaimed true story of a doctor who murdered his family. Furst reads from *Kingdom of Shadows,* his sixth novel. • 2/22 at 7 P.M. Housing Works Used Book Café, 126 Crosby St. (212-334-3324); free.

Tribute to Gwendolyn Brooks
A memorial reading for the African-American poet who recently passed away includes Elizabeth Alexander, Wesley Brown, Toi Derricotte, Sharon Olds, and several others. • 2/23 at 7 P.M. NYU's Lipton Hall, 108 W. 3rd St. (212-998-8816); free.

Nicholas Christopher
The poet, novelist, and Columbia writing teacher reads from *A Trip to the Stars.* • 2/25 at 7 P.M. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (212-505-3360); free.

Louisa Luna
The author reads from her debut novel, *Brave New Girl.* • 2/26 at 7:30 P.M. Barnes & Noble, 675 Sixth Ave., at 21st St. (212-727-1227); free.

Amy Tan
The best-selling author reads passages from her new novel, *The Bonesetter's Daughter.* • 2/26 at 8 P.M. The 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (212-415-5500); $15.

Melanie Neilson, Deirdre Kovac, and Rod Smith
The three poets (who are also publishers) read as part of NYU's series "Printonomy," featuring poet-publishers. • 2/26 at 7 P.M. Fales Library, third floor, NYU's Bobst Library, 70 Washington Sq. So. (212-998-2596); free.

Special Events

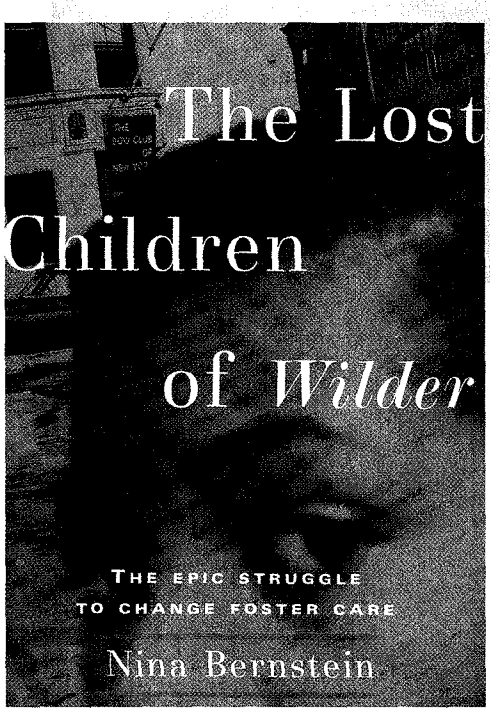
Tour

Chelsea Market's Art & Artists
Tour working studios above Chelsea Market, where the unique sculptures sold there are produced. After visiting the new gallery with its curator, grab a bite in one of the market's eateries. • 2/23, 10:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. Meet inside Ninth Ave. entrance of 175 Ninth Ave., at 15th St. (reservations required at 212-415-5500); $25, not including lunch.

In Print

Childhood Trauma

The perils of faith-based charities are not new. New York's mostly Jewish and Catholic (and taxpayer-funded) child-welfare agencies for decades excluded minorities from the city's foster-care beds, leading to a 1973 class-action suit filed on behalf of a 13-year-old runaway named Shirley Wilder. The verdict came fifteen years later, much too late for the plaintiff, and today both here and nationwide the system remains flawed and unwieldy. When New York *Times* reporter Nina Bernstein was researching the case eight years ago, Wilder asked the journalist to help track down her son, who was born in 1974 and disappeared in foster care. Bernstein found him, and in her important new book, **The Lost Children of Wilder,** she shows how the system has failed yet another generation. Bernstein discusses her work on February 21 a the Columbia School of Journalism. (Se "The Written Word" for details.)


The Lost Children of Wilder
THE EPIC STRUGGLE TO CHANGE FOSTER CARE
Nina Bernstein

Benefits

Mardi Gras Masquerade
The fund-raising gala hosted by the Cancer Research and Treatment Fund includes an open bar, buffet, silent auction, disco music, and masks for everyone. • 2/22, 7 P.M. to midnight. The Puck Building, 295-309 Lafayette St. (212-288-6604); $75.

"Masquerade on the Waterfront"
The Big Brothers and Big Sisters of NYC host their fifth annual black-tie masquerade, complete with a full casino, buffet dinner, dancing, silent auction, and open bar. Black-tie preferred, mask optional. • 2/24, 9 P.M. to 1 A.M. Bridgewaters, 11 Fulton St., across from South St. Seaport (www.bigsnyc.org); $125 in advance, $150 at the door.

Kristen Ann Carr Fund Winter Semi-Formal
Proceeds from the annual fund-raiser go to the fight against Sarcoma. Among the sponsors are Bruc Springsteen, Shania Twain, and Bob Costas, and th evening includes hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dancing, an a raffle and silent auction. • 2/24 at 9 P.M. The 200 Fift Club, 200 Fifth Ave., at 23rd St. (212-501-0748); $120.

Exhibits

"Japanese Advertising Deciphered, Sort of"
Japan's advertising, which reflects the unique imagery of the country's animation, fashion, and other forms of entertainment, is the focus of a five-week exhibit, including the work of Tugboat, Japan's hottest boutique agency. • Through 3/23. The One Club, 32 E. 21st St. (212-261-4254); free.

Traffik
Not the new Soderbergh movie but the five-part British television series from which the film took not only most of its finer plot points but much of its style and politics. • Through 4/29: Part One, Thursdays at 6 P.M. and Saturdays at 2 P.M.; Part Two, Fridays at 6 P.M. and Sundays at 2 P.M. Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (212-621-6600); free with $6 admission.

Other Events

Gramercy Garden Antiques Show
The show sponsored by the Horticulture Society of New York includes 80 top garden-antiques dealers and a beautiful interior garden and features several lectures on garden botany. • 2/22, 11 A.M. to 8 P.M.; 2/23, 11 A.M. to 7 P.M.; 2/24, 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. The 69th Regiment Armory, 68 Lexington Ave., at 26th St. (212-255-0020); $10.

The Art Show 2001
The Art Dealers Association of America holds its thirteenth annual show, benefiting the Henry Street Settlement and exhibiting museum-quality works ranging from old masters to contemporary works. • 2/22, 11 A.M. to 8 P.M. 2/23–2/25, 11 A.M. to 7 P.M.; 2/26, 11 A.M. to 6 P.M. The Seventh Regiment Armory, Park Ave., at 67th St. (212-940-8925); $15 per day.

Sports

Snowflake Four-Miler
The New York Road Runners Club hosts this four-mile run through Central Park. Starts at East Drive at 99th St., finishing at 97th St. Cash prizes. Numbers and long-sleeve T-shirts may be picked up at the NYRRC, 9 E. 89th St., 2/22–2/23 from noon to 7 P.M. or on race day from 7 to 9 A.M. Visit www.nyrrc.org to register or for more information. • 2/24; men at 8:30 A.M., women 9:30 A.M. (212-860-4455).

Game Week

HOME AWAY ▨

	Mon: 2/19	Tue: 2/20	Wed: 2/21	Thu: 2/22	Fri: 2/23	Sat: 2/24	Sun: 2/25
KNICKS		MIA MSG 8 P.M.	▨ DET MSG 7:30 P.M.		PHO MSG 7:30 P.M.		SAC NBC 12:30 P.M.
NETS			TOR FSNY 7:30 P.M.			▨ MIA FSNY 7:30 P.M.	WAS FSNY 8 P.M.
RANGERS	CHI MSG 1 P.M.				▨ PIT METRO 7:30 P.M.		▨ PHI ESPN 8 P.M.
ISLANDERS				PHI FSNY 7 P.M.		FLA FSNY 1 P.M.	▨ PIT ESPN 5 P.M.
DEVILS	▨ TOR FSNY 7:30 P.M.			BUF MSG 7:30 P.M.	▨ CAR FSNY 7 P.M.		
HITMEN						▨ CHI NBC 8 P.M.	

Kids

Edited by Susan Avery

Onstage

Play Stations

What do **Judy Blume** and **David Mamet** have in common? (Besides inspiring traditionalists to white-hot fury, that is.) Both have written children's books that come to the stage this Saturday. While Blume's coming-of-age novels are familiar to any child or parent of the past two decades, many people don't know that Mamet, the Pulitzer Prize–winning author of such profanity-laced dramas as *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *American Buffalo*, has also dabbled in kid stuff for decades. "He's such a great writer and storyteller," explains Mark Torchia, who's producing Mamet's twenty-year-old story *The Revenge of the Space Pandas*, "that his carefully developed characters can successfully take any number of shapes and forms—including those that appeal to children." *The Revenge of the Space Pandas* is the story of two kids and a sheep who escape the seemingly unbearable boredom of their Illinois lives by traveling through space and time to the dangerous planet Crestview, where they soon realize their relatively safe life at home isn't so bad after all. *Space Pandas* director Robert Bella says the play is "Mamet-esque in its sense of humor and suspense, though it's not at all scary or violent in the way many people think Mamet's work might be." That said, if you still feel safer with the sweet agonies of Judy Blume, opt for the musical adaptation of her best-selling *Superfudge* (cast pictured), about 11-year-old Peter Hatcher and his always-in-trouble little brother. (See "Children's Events" for details.)

TARA MANDY

Children's Events

Fudge It
Theatreworks/USA presents a musical adaptation of *Superfudge*, the popular Judy Blume book about 11-year-old Peter Hatcher, who struggles to take care of his brother Fudge, who is just 4 years old and always getting himself into trouble. • 2/24 at 12:30 P.M.; The Auditorium at Equitable Tower, 787 Seventh Ave., bet. 51st and 52nd Sts. (212-627-7373); $19.

Pandemonium
The Revenge of the Space Pandas, a children's play by David Mamet, will be presented the next two Saturdays by the Atlantic Theater Company. An adventurous story about three kids who travel to a new world in a time machine, *Space Pandas* delights audiences of all ages with the humor and wit characteristic of Mamet's work. • 2/24 and 3/3 at 10:30 A.M.; The Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (212-691-5919); tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 12.

Cocoa Puffery
According to the folks at the New York Botanical Garden, the cacao tree, the one that yummy chocolate comes from, is in danger of extinction because of rain-forest destruction. In order to save this precious commodity, start with an education during Chocolate Month. Kids pummel their own beans to make hot chocolate, create rain-forest crafts, and become a part of interactive chocolate storytelling. Find the live tree in the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory. • Through 3/11; 200th St. and Kazimiroff Blvd., the Bronx (718-817-8700); Garden Passport $7, $4.50 students and seniors, $2 kids 2-12.

Tales From Hans Christian Andersen
Two of the fairy-tale master's most treasured works—*The Little Mermaid* and *The Nightingale*—are brought to the ballet stage in time for winter recess. A premiere performance for New York Theatre Ballet. • Through 2/25; Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (212-355-6160); $25, $20 kids.

Gimme Five
High 5 Tickets to the Arts, an organization that offers teens $5 tickets to the theater, museums, and other entertainment venues throughout the five boroughs, will begin selling tickets for April and May events on February 23. Spring events include productions at venues like the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the New York City Opera, plus exhibits at institutions that include the ICP and the Guggenheim Museum.• Pick up a High 5 catalogue at bookstores and public libraries throughout the city, or call 212-445-8587 for further information.

Hail to the First Chief
Kids who were caught up in the election debacle may be interested in a new book called *Georgeisms*, a compendium of President Washington's rules of civility that he held to from school age into old age. (It is said that he kept a copy of the rules with him through the War of Independence.) From Simon & Schuster. • Available in bookstores; $7.95.

Make Art
The free Family Art Works program at the Educational Alliance is back in full swing. Kids, along with their parents, grandparents, or caregivers, share skills and make a different project every Sunday. Reservations suggested. • Sundays through 4/22, from 1 to 2:30 P.M. (no classes on 4/8 and 4/15); 197 E. Broadway (212-780-2300, ext. 316); free.

ID Tags
The American Museum of Natural History hosts "Identification Day" this Saturday, when kids can bring their special finds—rocks, bugs, feathers, and other natural objects—to the museum to be identified and classified by scientists. But moms, beware: No sneaking in those earrings you received for your birthday; no appraisals will be given, and the museum will not identify gemstones. • 2/24, from 1 to 4:30 P.M.; 79th St. at Central Park West (212-769-5200); free.

Psycho-Babbling
Use your head and find out the secrets of the mind. The New York Hall of Science opens a new exhibit, "Psychology: It's More Than You Think," that shows kids how the brain develops, explores emotions, tests memory, and uncovers the weaknesses of human observation. • Through 4/29; Flushing Meadows Corona Park, 47-01 111th St., Queens (718-699-0005); $7.50, $5 seniors and kids 4-17.

Playing Taps
Hot-stepping hoofers and rhythmic beats are the ignition behind the improvisational *Urban Tap*. The show fuses freestyle tap, African stilt dancing, hip-hop, capoeira, and video to create a powerful jam session. • Through 2/25 at the New Victory Theater, 209 W. 42nd St. (212-239-6200); $10-$20.

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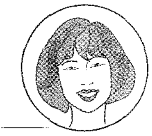


What do lawyers in New York generally charge someone buying a co-op or a condo?

A: The fees lawyers charge vary widely depending upon experience and the services expected of them. Generally, though, a simple closing should cost from $800 to $1500 or a co-op, and from $1200 to $2000 for a condo. Co-op closings tend to be less expensive because they rarely involve title searches, the process by which lawyers confirm that the seller actually owns the property and that no liens exist against the property. It is important to remember that, if a lender is involved, then the buyer should expect to pay bank attorney fees of $300 to $600 in addition to the fees of his personal lawyer.

LaLa Wang is CEO of New York City based MLX.com, a residential real estate community and technology company connecting consumers and professionals. For more expert advice or to ask a question, email LaLa at asklala@mlx.com

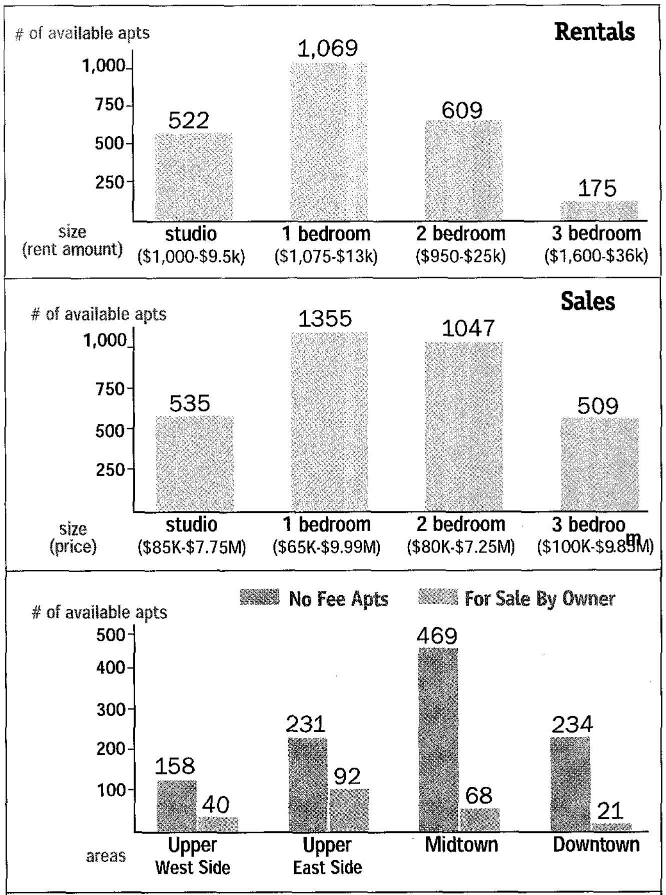
Best Broker of The Week

Senior Sales Associate, Heron Residential
Estelle Meister

Named Hotshot Broker for Murray Hill by New York Magazine in April 1999, Estelle Meister has been selling luxury homes in Manhattan since 1989. Having grown up in Manhattan, she has an invaluable knowledge of and love for its buildings and neighborhoods. Her extensive background in marketing, keen negotiating skills and high principles make her a most valuable broker to have on your side. She enjoys working both as an exclusive broker and a buyer's broker, and when representing property exclusively, she utilizes her expertise and knowledge of the real estate market in insuring that the property is priced correctly. She makes sure that her clients are fully aware as to her marketing progress. According to Estelle, having a happy client/customer makes for good referrals, and that's what this business is about.

Contact Estelle Meister at 212-490-4900 x 228 or visit the Heron Residential website at www.heronltd.com.

MLX Market Watch



Top 5 Brokerages by Current Aggregate Sales Exclusives*

Company Names	Sales Exclusives
1. Douglas Elliman	$850,799,500
2. Corcoran Group	$762,032,000
3. Halstead Property Co.	$197,357,400
4. Bellmarc Realty	$84,999,400
5. Sumitomo Real Estate, Inc.	$36,936,000

*as based upon listings provided to MLX database

Date: As of February 9, 2001. Source: MLX.com

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KnickerbockerVillage.com

Property ID 4721

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LRGE FURN STUDIO LOFT
Flex terms, designer deco. Ask.........$3300
Call Owner, **Diana** **801-209-5780**

Property ID 4802

W 58 St/off 5th Ave. **Lux Drmn Bldg**
FURN ALCOVE STUDIO $2500
Murphy Bed, Queen Sofa, Sleeps 4. Includes stereo,TV, linens, towels, vacuum.
Kirby Sommers **Bkr 212-787-8726**

Property ID 3996

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Property ID 4703

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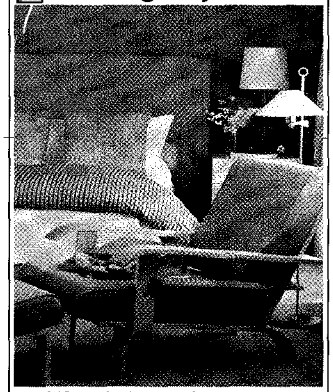
Property ID 4804

The Regency Hotel



Life is "suite" at the Regency.
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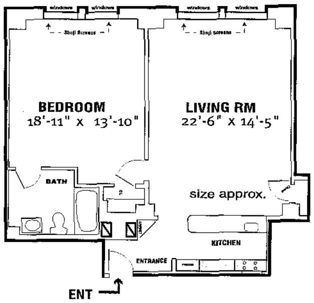
Call Amina Muhammed at 212.339.4013

Unfurnished

Upper East Side

Property ID 4566



Madison and 74th.
Premier prewar 24 hr DM bldg. Impressive artist's1 BR, reno kit opens to colorful LR with h/w flrs, built in banquette & shoji screens. BR large w/work desk & lux reno bth. Avail 4/1/01 furn $3800 or unfurn $3600. BA required. Broker **212.645.3610.**

Upper West Side

Property ID 4511

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Midtown

Property ID 4515

48th St./UN Vic **Trump Intl.**
Stunn 2Br, 2Bth , Extraord river Views, 1618 sqft, most lux & tallest residen bldg in the world....$12,000. Avail Imm.
Sarah Segal **212-414-4616**

Property ID 4648

E. 30s/First Avenue
1 BR convertible to 2BR, 780sf, views from hi floor in F/S condo, health club, pool, $2900, avail Feb 15. **Broker 645-3610**

Chelsea/Gramercy

Property ID 4510

Chelsea **Art District**
FINEST TOWNHOUSE RESIDENCE
MINT Thruout..come enjoy the pleasures of "owning" a townhouse for 2 yrs in NY's Hottest neighborhood. Settle into a perfect mix of 19th C. charm & contemp comfort including grand country kit, FDR, 5 spacious BRs, 2 offices, sunroom, serene "English Garden" &C/AC. Unfurnished, $18,000. **MANHATTAN HOMES**
manhattanhomesinc.com 777-7227

Lower Manhattan

Property ID 4560

Noho **Elizabeth**
Grace PH 2 BR, 2Bth, WBFP, skylite, sep kit, DW, HWF, 12 ft ceil, elev, laundry, lrge prv Terr, exercise rm, AmazView!....$4650
KnickerbockerVillage.com 212-377-5757

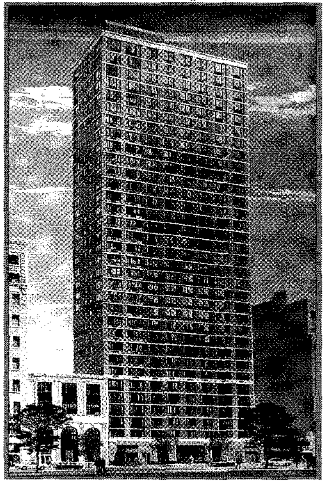
Property ID 4559

Soho/Spring St. ***Loft, Loft, Loft***
Huge pre-war LOFT, org dtls, hi tin ceil oak fl. Chef kit, DW, WD, S/N exp, WIC Jacuzzi tub, great Vu, Sunny.........$6000
Alex Chang **212-377-5757 x203**
KnickerbockerVillage.com

Brooklyn Rentals

180 Montague St.
Brooklyn Heights, NY

Property ID 4527



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Sales

Upper West Side

Property ID 4792

Upper West Side
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*Property ID 4309 *

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1. Find the Property ID on the right top from print ad.

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1 BR, 1 BT, post war clean elv bldg
Fantastic view! 24 dmn, jacuzzi, mbl ktn & bt, huge balcony, details, garage, pets OK, Financing 75%

2. Log onto www.nymag.mlx.com and type in the Property ID. Click on the Go! button on the right.

Enter Property # you saw in New York Mag.
45674 go!

3. Online ad will come up with full available details and contact's profile

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Real Estate
MLX.com

Douglas Elliman

DouglasElliman.com

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5th Ave, lo 80s **5 Rooms**

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Isabelle Cheatham **350-2208**

Property ID#4750

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Vanessa A. Di Monte **353-5226**

Property ID#4751

East 70s **"3" BRs +++**

STEAL A SIX...

...for under $800K – facing sunny South – 3 bedrooms plus 2 baths, office/nursery and windowed kitchen. Do call Marilyn *TODAY at h# 988-0582

Marilyn Presser **350-2235**

Property ID#4752

TriBeCa/Wall St. **Huge 3 BR/2 bath**

GET ALOT FOR YOUR $$

2400 SF doorman condo! Abundant S & E light! High-end chef's kitchen, wide LR/DA w/12 ft ceilings. Laundry rm, ample closets. $1.495M. Low CC.

R. Hardinger, VP **965-6018**
CM Norton, VP **965-6022**

Property ID#4753

CPW/70s **Rare Offering**

FULL FLOOR IN TOWER

Fully loaded! Formal dining room, eat-in kitchen, library, central AC, WBFP, all in 9 rooms (3 bedrooms/4.5 baths) w/best Park views. 4 expos, private elevator in top Prewar coop. Exclusive.

Iva Spitzer, SVP **769-9827**

Property ID#4754

TriBeCa - 2200 SF **Move Right In**

THE VERY BEST

Bright E/W facing loft! Gracious wide LR & dining area, WBFP with carved mantle. Grand MBR suite – soaking tub. 2nd BR/guest. $1.375M. Low CC.

R. Hardinger, VP **965-6018**
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Property ID 4573

LINCOLN CTR Vic **W. Side Condo**
2BR 2.5 Ba PH, Ask....$1.350M, 3BRs 2.5 Ba reno. Hi Flr, views,Ask......$1.250M
Sumitomo RE **Gloria G. 212 651-2253**

Property ID 4513

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Upper East Side

Property ID 4517

E 87 St. Elegant **Park Ave Court**
Lux 1BR Condo, 859 S/F, Hi ceils, mint cond. lrge win. H/C, pool, grdn.....$540K
$arah $egal Realty **212-414-4616**

Property ID 4505

444 East 75th Street. **Apt.#2H**

Spacious 1 Bedroom D/M Co-Op
Overlook landscaped grdn. Entre foyer, carpeting, north expo w/ great light, lrge windows. New kitch, pass-thru, Pre-wired built-in sound system, DSL, P/W bldg w/ good finance, afford private garage avail across the St. Make offers!
Joe **212-220-4663x 263**

Property ID 4546

60sOFF 3rd. **1400 sf + 2 Brs, 2 Bths**
AMAZING CONDO DEAL $699KFabulous location, F/S Drmn Bldg, w/roofdeck, gym. Great layout. **Laura Matiz**
Bellmarc RE **517-9100 x 222**

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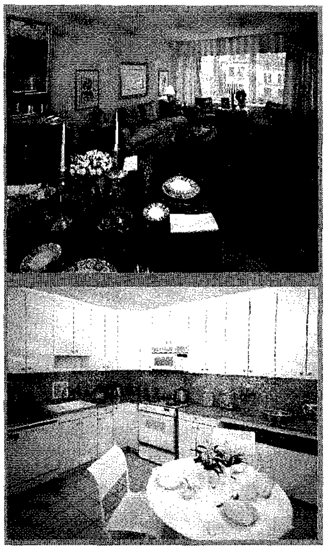
212 328 0446 ext 240

OpenhouseNYC.com

Property ID 3901

52 Park Avenue Luxury Condos



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80s E Mad/Pk Super Lux DM bldg
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Enormous 2 BR. Lge ent fyr. Huge LR, FDR, windowed EIK, Terr. Vus! $1.1M
Tim Ursu x 320
212 750.HOME
www.goodsteinrealty.com

Property ID 4557

50s W ***Full Service CONDO***
Beaut 1 BR, super hi flr, sep wndwed kit sun-drenched, Amaz Pk Vu, Low CC! $365K. **Knickerbocker Village NY, Inc.**
Alon Vaknin **212-377-5757 ext. 202**

Gramercy

Property ID 4522

235 E. 22 ST. **GRAMERCY Hse**
Bright sunny Deco Delight Very large 3.5 rms, w/seprt DA, WBFP many clsts, roof grdn, exercise rm................ $460K
Jeff Weisbord RE **212-496-6042**

East & West Village

Property ID 4555

GV/Bedford St. ***DM - Elev***
Spacious 1 BR, Hi Flr, Open Sky Empire State Vu, hwf, sep kit. 2 expos, mint, laundry, no BA, Lo Mt...................$365K
Knickerbocker Village NY, Inc.
Sawyer Smith **212-377-5757 ext. 223**

Property ID 4794

GV/Coveted site **1 BR $345K**
Town House, 1200' Grand Parlor Floor, Priceless Jefferson Market View, roomy, reno, pass-thru kit, F/S DRMN, roof deck, gym, Co-op
Barshay Brokerage **212 -645-8866 x 2**

SoHo

Property ID 4556

Soho/W. B'way ***New to Market!***
2 BR & 2BTH CONDO LOFT
dplx, prewar, pt DM, elev, hi ceil, hwf,double expos, large wndwed kit, Rare Find! $885K. **Knickerbocker Village NY, Inc.**
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Sales Outside NYC

Florida

Property ID 4702

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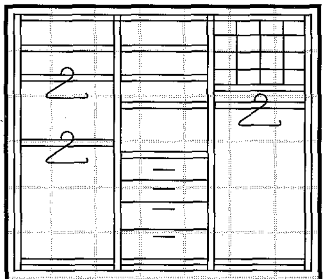

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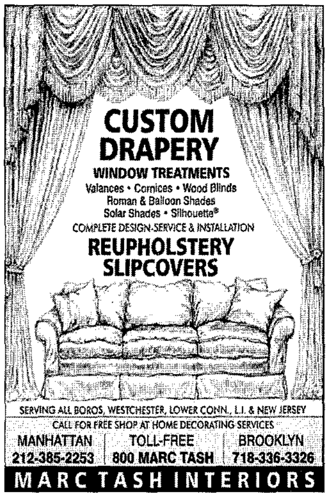

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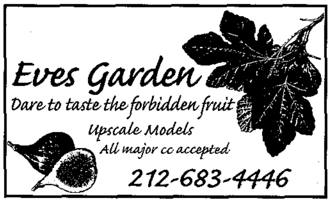
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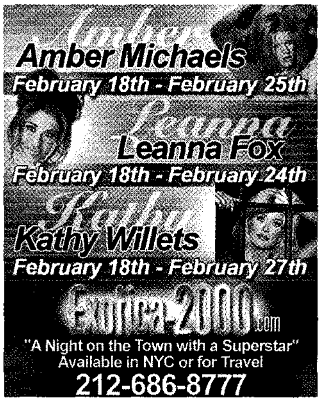
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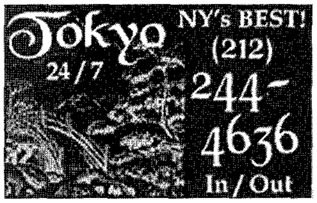
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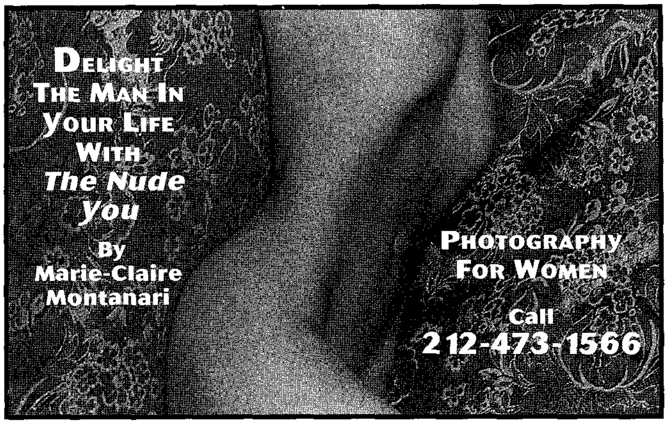
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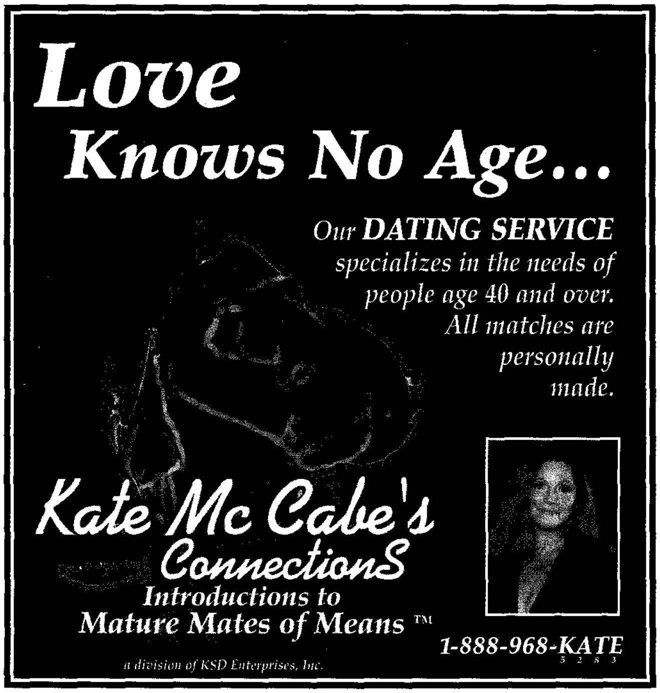

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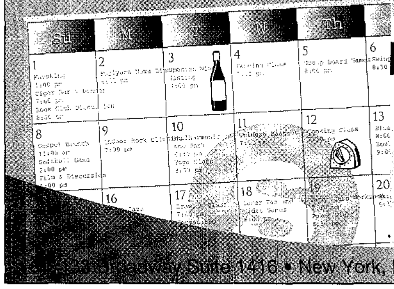

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